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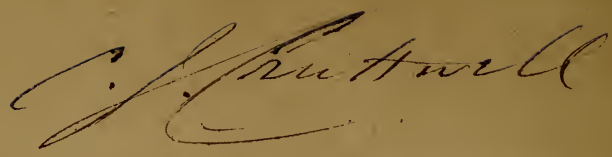

AN

EPISTOLARY DISCOURSE

CONTAINING

A NEW RESOLUTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE GRAND APOCALYPTICAL QUESTION,

CONCERNING

THE RISE AND FALL OF ROME PAPAL.

BY ROBERT FLEMING.

(Reprinted from the first edition in 1701.*)*

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SIMMONS

PREFACE.

WANT of discernment of the signs of the times is reprobated as folly by the highest authority. When, however, a Revelation has been given, expressly to show "things which must shortly come to pass," such folly is more culpable. Especially in great crises of national affairs, when gloom and doubt pervade society, when the whole political horizon is clouded, and men are anxiously feeling their way towards an untried state, we shall do well to take heed to our sure word of prophecy, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place. If any despise this illumination, let him ponder the import of the Apostle's statement, that when he heard no answer to the proclamation in heaven, "Who is worthy to take the book, and to loose the seals thereof?" he wept much; but when the "Lamb in the midst of

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the throne" had taken it, fresh adoration and a new song celebrated His worthy triumph.

In common with other words of prophecy, especially those written in symbolic characters, the precise meaning of the Apocalypse is not patent to every reader; but is rather covered from the unlearned, the sceptical, and the disobedient. Many and profound have been the investigations in this field; though but few divines have succeeded, with true instinct, in tracking the precious vein, and unearthing the hidden treasure. The author of the following Discourse has been eminently successful in this way; and as he has long since passed on, to receive his reward, it devolves upon us, who come after him, to summon our neighbours to rejoice over the recovered riches he has left us. For, though his discoveries were made nearly a century and a half ago, the lapse of time, instead of tarnishing their lustre, has served but to illustrate their value. The time is come, when they will be subjected to a more rigorous assay; and as they have endured the test so far, they are thus again introduced to public notice.

Mr. Robert Fleming, one of the last of the Puritan divines, published this Epistolary Discourse in 1701. His principal object is to give a new resolution to the grand apocalyptical question concerning the rise and fall of the great Antichrist, or Rome Papal. He dates its first rise in 606, when the pope first received the title

of supreme and universal bishop ; from which he computes that its reign, of 1260 prophetic years' duration, will expire in the present year, 1848. But, as he reckons its full rise did not take place till 758, when the pope was invested with independent temporal authority, he supposes it will continue to exist till the year 2000, though in a weakened state. He regards its fall to be symbolized by the outpouring of the seven vials ; which he interprets on this principle : "that seeing the vials do suppose a struggle or war between the popish and reformed parties, every vial is to be looked upon as the event and conclusion of some new periodical attack of that first party upon this other ; the issue of which proves at length favourable to the latter against the former." He therefore supposes the event prefigured by the outpouring of the first vial upon the earth, to be the beginning of the Reformation. He considers the period in which he writes, to be that of the fourth vial, poured out upon the sun, as the type of the French monarchy ; which period would close about the year 1794. "The French monarchy," he says, "at least before the year 1794," may be "considerably humbled." The fifth vial, poured out upon the "seat (or throne) of the beast," he conjectures to be a judgment upon the papal power, extending from 1794 to 1848, "so as to ruin his authority."

The signal confirmation which these conjectures, as to

the periods of then future judgments, have received, requires little comment. That regarding the fourth vial, has been verified to the letter. The recent overthrow of the French monarchy may be regarded as confirming the sentence formerly pronounced against it; and is, perhaps, designed to show the futility of human efforts to reverse a Divine decree. For it would seem as if in the thrice-subverted throne of the French monarch, were fulfilling the word concerning the profane prince of Israel: "Remove the diadem, and take off the crown: this shall not be the same: exalt him that is low, and abase him that is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn; and it shall be no more, till he come, whose right it is; and I will give it him."

The author's conjecture regarding the fifth vial, the period of which is just expiring, is not less important. The expulsion of monastic orders from many catholic countries; the estrangement of the most powerful supporters of the Roman hierarchy, and their enfeebled condition; the contemplated withdrawment of state support from religious establishments in France; the surrender of despotic power in temporal affairs by the present pontiff, and his willingness to renounce all his secular authority;—these, and other events that already cast their shadows across the present year, will form a fitting conclusion to the judgments which have visited the Roman Antichrist during the last half-century. It

is remarkable, too, that as the "event," according to Mr. Fleming, of this vial, was ushered in by the first French Revolution, so its "conclusion" is accompanied by the second. It is too soon, however, to determine how the papacy will withstand this repeated shock. "The throne of the beast," upheaved from its old foundations by the convulsions which shook the earth in 1794, may yet be seen in ruins ere this year is run out.

Mr. Fleming's conjectures concerning the ensuing judgment upon the Mohammedan power, symbolized by the outpouring of the sixth vial upon the river Euphrates, and the complete destruction of both the forms of Antichrist about the year 2000, at the commencement of the sabbatical millennium — the final apostacy — and the judgment day, of a thousand years' duration — are likewise full of interest. The practical character, too, of the Discourse is not its least recommendation; according well with the benediction, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they which hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand."

March 16th, 1848.

AN

EPISTOLARY DISCOURSE.

TO ALL MY TRUE AND GOOD FRIENDS EVERYWHERE; BUT MORE PARTICULARLY TO THE WORTHY GENTLEMEN AND OTHERS THAT COMPOSE THE CHURCH TO WHICH I AM NOW RELATED AS A MINISTER.

My Dear Friends,

In compliance with the frequent and repeated desires of a great many of you, I suffer the following discourses to break loose from their fellows, to take their fortune, as we used to say, in the wide world. And, seeing the candour of so many of my friends has made them think they might not be unuseful, I must therefore expect that they will, from the same principle, defend this publication of them, against the censures they may be supposed to fall under, both from open enemies and pretended friends. For, though it be a common and, as it were, thread-bare argument, to plead importunity in this case; yet it is sufficiently known to several of you, that if it had not been for this, the world had not been troubled with any thing further of this kind from me. For as I am sure no affectation to be more known or taken notice of, has influenced me to present these discourses to public

view; so I do suppose it is not unknown to some of you, that retirement from this noisy and vain world has ever been the sum of my ambition, excepting when public work and service has obliged me to shake off the beloved fetters of so dear a confinement.

I shall not, therefore, say more as to the following essays, than to tell you (what many of you know already) that, as the first of the discourses that follow this prefatory one gave rise to the publishing of the second, so the second gave occasion to the printing of the third. And, therefore, seeing the late opportunity of preaching, when we entered into our new Meeting-place here in London, Sept. 29, 1700, did induce some of you to desire the publication also of that sermon I preached when I entered upon the pastoral and ministerial work among you, June 19, 1698, the same occasion has given birth to the last additional discourse, which some remember I made, when I was solemnly set apart to the ministerial office, Feb. 9, 1687-8, which I have the rather consented to print now, because it doth not only suit with the second discourse, but because I remember several false or at least imperfect copies were taken of it, when I did at first deliver it.

And seeing the last discourse (which yet was the first as to time) doth now appear in the view of the world, I found myself in some sort obliged to interest all my friends in this prefatory address: wherein I do particularly include those of the English Church of Leyden, and Scots Church in Rotterdam, to whom I stood related successively as minister or pastor; whom I do the rather mention here, that I may let them know how much they are still upon my thoughts, though we are separated as to place.

But seeing my work is more particularly appropriated to you, whom I am more immediately concerned with and related unto at present, I do therefore in a more special

manner address myself to you at this time. And I hope ye will bear with me, if, from my sincere respect for your welfare, I detain you awhile here, before ye enter upon the perusal either of my apocalyptical thoughts following, or the other discourses, which I do present you with, at your own desire. For, in case either of death, or being otherwise rendered incapable to serve you, I am willing to give a vent to my thoughts and affection at this time; that whatever comes of me, the following discourses, together with this, may stand as a lasting witness of my real concern for your souls' welfare.

In the first place, therefore, I do declare, that though I am not willing to state my sufferings upon little matters or modes of worship and expression; yet I can sincerely say, that should the Divine providence call me to lay down my life for the truths themselves, which I have preached among you, I hope I should be so far from quarrelling with the procedure of God, this way, that I should rejoice in such a martyrdom. And, as I hope I have not contradicted in my life, what I have preached in the pulpit, whatever my infirmities have been; so, I presume, it will not be looked upon as pride or vanity, if I say with the great apostle (though, as to the last clause, I dare not pretend to have been any pattern to you); "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are venerable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you." Phil. iv. 8, 9.

For, in the next place, I thank God, that he, who knows the secrets of all hearts, doth testify together with my conscience, that a sincere concern to be useful to our common Christianity, was the thing that did, at first,

influence me to enter upon this great work of the ministry, and hath ever since engaged me, though under more discouragements than most men, to continue in it. So that it is matter of sweet reflection to me, that I never gave any occasion to brand our holy profession with the odious name of priestcraft, whatever any others have done. For, as I have had no other ambition, than to engage and draw men over to the great and catholic interests of Christianity itself, in order to their becoming the followers and servants of our glorious God and blessed Saviour; so, I am sure I can confidently say, without any vanity or affectation (for which I dare appeal not only to you, but all others that have known me, ever since I began to preach), that there is not one in the world, that ever had just occasion so much as to think, that I did at any time attempt to bring any person over to my way, as a party. And as thus I have been far from from seeking either honour, interest, or popularity; so there are not a few that can bear me witness, that I have incurred the censures of some men of very different denominations, because I could never be induced to think that religion did properly stand in the rituals of any of the contending parties.

The differences, therefore, but especially the animosities, that are among Protestant Christians, have ever been grievous and afflictive to me. And to heal these, I could cheerfully be offered up a sacrifice, if I can be supposed to be conscious of the sentiments and movements of my own soul. For though we of this congregation differ from all others that dissent from the episcopal communion, in this, that we are in a peculiar sense upon a national foundation—viz., in as far as we not only own the same church government, but keep up the same way that the Church of Scotland useth in her public administrations, to which most of us belong as natives, and all of us as proselytes; yet I must publicly own, that abstract-

ing from this, I am a dissenter from that party who engross and monopolize the name of the Church of England. For though I have ever looked upon other controversies as more edifying and momentous, than those unhappy ones that have kept that great body and ours divided, yet I have so far considered them, as hitherto to find no reason to quit that way I was educated in, notwithstanding the specious reasons made use of, to prejudice people against us as schismatics, rather than to convince us that we are so.

Therefore, in the third place, I cannot but own (without any design to reflect upon them that differ from me in such matters), that I look upon that way as nearest to the Christian institution, that has the fewest, and most natural and unaffected, and consequently most spiritual rites and ceremonies, in the performance of gospel ordinances. For, as a learned Conformist says * in a book which he did afterwards indeed seem to differ from, but never attempted to retract or refute, and, perhaps, was never able to do, "Certainly the primitive church, that did not charge men with such a load of articles, as now in these latter ages men are charged with, would much less have burdened men with imposing doubtful practices upon them as the ground of church communion. There is nothing, then, that the primitive church deserves more imitation in by us, than that admirable temper, moderation, and condescension, which was used in it towards all the members of it. It was never thought worth the while to make any standing laws for rites and customs, that had no other original than tradition, much less to suspend men from her communion for not observing them." And if this was the practice of the primitive church, it was eminently so in the apostolical age; to whom, as acted by the Holy Ghost, it seemed good to require nothing by

* Stilling. Iren. page 122, 68.

way of imposition, but a few very necessary things—viz., that Christians should abstain from idols, blood, things strangled, and fornication. (Acts xv., 28, 29.) But alas! since that time it hath seemed good to men (but I am sure not to the Holy Spirit), to impose a great many unnecessary things on the consciences of others, without any such allowance as was given them, that every man should be fully persuaded in his own mind, in what he did. (Rom. xiv. 5.) For what regard have some men to this apostolical rule, when their impositions are laid as stumbling-blocks in their brethren's way, (Rom. xiv. 13, &c.,) without any regard to the wounding of their weak consciences, upon the supposition they are so? (1 Cor. viii. 12.) Is this to imitate the apostle's tenderness, who resolved rather never to eat flesh, than to offend any weak brother? (1 Cor. viii. 13.) Or, do men this way seek the things of Jesus Christ, or their own private ends and emoluments most? (Phil. ii. 21.)

Therefore, let men dispute about forms and ceremonies, and their decency or necessity, as long as they please: I must say, with a reverend conforming minister,* "That all the art and power of the world cannot make trifles in the worship of God, seem matters of importance to them that relish heaven. What trumpery are habits, various gestures and postures, to a man that is swallowed up in the contemplation of the infinite majesty of the glorious God? Or that is lost in the ravishing admiration of his goodness and love? Or that is sunk into the lowest abasements and self-abhorrence for his sins? Such a soul may be loaded with human inventions, but he can never look upon them as ornaments or helps to devotion."

Whatever then be the various ideas and theories of what we call edification; yet still, as none can dispute

* See P. M. in his "Vanity, Mischief, and Danger of Ceremonies," proposed to the Convocation, and printed A.D. 1690.

us out of what we receive most advantage from, as to our bodies, so neither as to our souls. For if no man can be able to persuade me, that his constitution of body is such a standard to mankind, that I and all others are obliged to reckon that food most healthful for us, which the imposer tells us is so to him, though, at the same time, we experience it to be noxious or disagreeable to us. I know no more reason, why any man should pretend a power of imposing modes and forms on my conscience, which I am dissatisfied with, from no other reason but this, that they appear to be the most excellent or decent to him. So that, as liberty is equally necessary in the one case as in the other, unless we value the health of our bodies above the peace of our consciences and security of our souls; so the contrary practice, when force is used, can admit of no softer term than that of anti-christian tyranny. I cannot, therefore, but highly approve of what I find in a book I have already mentioned.* "What possible reason can be given," says the author, "why such things should not be sufficient for communion with a church, which are sufficient for salvation? And certainly these things are sufficient for that, which are laid down as the necessary duties of Christianity, by our Lord and Saviour in his word."

I mention these things, God is my witness, for no private design, to uphold a party, or to serve the ends of it as such, but to let those that are prejudiced against us, know, that we are acted by religion as a principle, and not as a notion only; and that this is the reason of our dissent from those that share the emoluments of the church among them. Otherwise it were not probable that we should unite, in acting contrary to our own interest, merely from faction or humour, if we may presume to know our own sentiments; and I hope most, if not all of

* Stilling. Iren. preface, p. 8.

us, durst not dissemble before the great God all our days, in a matter of so great importance as this is. So that the dissenting of so many persons from the established church, to their own hurt and disadvantage in the world, may be looked upon as no contemptible argument by unbiassed persons, that there are some men that are acted by religion as a principle, and that take up the ministry otherwise than as a trade.

But I had this further design in touching upon our unhappy differences; that considering that they do only concern the externals and circumstantials of religion, both ye and all others that peruse these lines, and the following discourses, may be taken off from that fury and bigotry, by which so many seem to be possessed at this day, and may learn to mind the great essentials of Christianity more, acting conscientiously yourselves in all things, and judging charitably of those that differ from you, whether they do so of you or not. For what I have said on this head, is not in the least designed to reflect upon those that differ from us, among whom I acknowledge there are many distinguishable, not only for parts and learning, but for piety and moderation also, upon which accounts I cannot but honour and love them, though they should both despise and hate me. Nay, I question not, but even many of the bigots for cathedral-worship and its annexed hierarchy (who are for running up these to as near a conformity to Rome as they can, and yet stamp all with a confident pretending to a JUS DIVINUM,) may act from conscience even in their uncharitableness to them that conscientiously differ from them, yea, in their hatred of them, and rage against them where they have power. But then it must be remembered, that as their zeal is not according to knowledge, so they are of the same tribe with those of whom our Saviour speaks when he tells us, that they would persecute, yea, kill his servants, when they had opportunity,

believing at the same time, that they did God most acceptable service. But he immediately adds, "And these things will they do, because they have not known the Father nor me." (John xvi. 2. 3.) However, my design is not to reflect even on them, but rather to pity them, and wish them more knowledge, and a better mind.

For as a contentious and especially a persecuting temper was never from God, nor according to the rule of the meek and holy Jesus, whose religion is first pure and then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated (James iii. 17, 18); so such a disposition was never more unseasonable than at this time. For they must be unaccountably unobservant of, and unconcerned with the present state and posture of affairs in Europe, who see not in what danger the Protestant interest is at present; considering what it has lost already, and is in hazard of losing further, together with the sad decay of true Christian piety, as well as unity, among all sorts of persons. I could therefore wish we might learn a little prudence, even from our popish adversaries, that we might unite in love, and in design to promote a general interest, though we attain not to an exact uniformity in all things. For why should not we join as one soul against that bloody and idolatrous party, when we see them do so against us? though their various sects and orders, such as Franciscans and Dominicans, Jesuits, and Jansenists, differ as much from one another, both in their opinions and in their form and habits (as they are regimented under their several heads or generals, and as they live according to vastly different laws and rules,) as we can possibly be supposed to do. But, alas! what moral prognostications have we now, but such as seem to portend ruin and misery to us? when we see the differences of parties grow up in a stated hatred, with a fixed design to ruin one another, and consequently murder the reformed

cause, which we are obliged not only upon religious accounts to appear for, but even upon civil considerations, seeing Popery is inconsistent with freedom and liberty, than which nothing in this world ought to be so dear to us. Can we have forgotten what barbarities that inhuman party have committed in the world? "For, if we may believe historians," says a learned man* "Pope Julius in seven years, was the occasion of the slaughter of 200,000 Christians. The massacre in France cut off 100,000 in three months. P. Perionius avers, that in the persecution of the Albigenses and Waldenses, 1,000,000 lost their lives. From the beginning of the Jesuits, till 1580, that is thirty or forty years, 900,000 perished, saith Balduinus. The Duke of Alva, by the hangman, put 36,000 to death. Vergerius affirms that the Inquisition in 30 years destroyed 150,000. To all this I may add the Irish Rebellion, in which 300,000 were destroyed, as the Lord Orery reports in a paper printed in the reign of Charles II." And how many have been destroyed in the late persecutions in France and Piedmont, in the Palatinate and Hungary, none, I believe, can fully reckon up, besides those that are or have been in the gallies, and that have fled. This is that idolatrous harlot, so glutted with the blood of the saints, that a late author, in his Treatise of Convocations, sets up as a pattern to the Church of England; and that another author, in his book entitled, The Case of the Regale and Pontificate (to the scandal of the Church of England, for whom they pretend such a zeal), would so fain have us united unto, and represents therefore in such favourable colours. But I hope all true Protestants will easily see the snake in the grass; and, surely, when we are in hazard of being betrayed within ourselves, we have sufficient reason to

* Dr. More in his Divine Dialogues, p. 161. See also his Mystery of Iniquity, lib. 2, chap. 15, 16, &c.

awake out of our lethargic sleep, that we may do what possibly we can to save the nations we belong to, from approaching desolations: or if that cannot be, that we may, at least, save our own souls in the day of the Lord. For seeing we are like to feel the effects of the new conjunction of France and Spain, the election of a young politic Pope, and the apostacy of some Protestant princes to the Romish interest (which, together with the impieties and scepticism of a great many within ourselves, are, I am sure, no good prognostics,) have we not just reason to prepare for remarkable revolutions? While, therefore, I think of these things, I cannot forbear to give a vent to my thoughts on the great and dark head of futurity, in presenting you with some conjectures in relation to our times, founded upon Scripture prophesy, as far as I understand it.

Therefore, seeing this is the chief design of this discourse, which I have inscribed to you, I hope ye will bear with me in giving you some brief account of the times we are fallen in, and what we may expect if we live much longer. Which I am the rather induced to do, because we are just now entering upon a new age, from which we look back upon seventeen centuries, which have elapsed since our blessed Redeemer came into the world, and may therefore be allowed to conjecture with some just ground perhaps of probability (for I do industriously avoid the fatal rock of positiveness, which so many apocalyptical men have suffered themselves to split upon) what part of the revelation remains yet to be accomplished.

But since I am to confine myself to a little compass here, as remembering I am writing no book properly, but an epistolary discourse, prefatory to those that follow, with which therefore it must keep some proportion, I shall content myself in giving you a few hints towards the resolution and improvement of that grand apocalyp-

tical question, When the reign of Antichristianism or the Papacy began?

There are two things, therefore, which lie before me to be considered at this time.

I. I must fulfil my promise in giving you a new resolution of the grand apocalyptical question concerning the rise of the great Antichrist or Rome Papal. For when we have done this, and fixed this era, or epocha, we may by an easy consequence, see the time of the final fall and destruction of this dreadful enemy.

II. I must in the next place improve the resolution of this question, both theoretically, as a key to unriddle the dark apocalyptical times and periods; and practically, in order both to the regulation of your thoughts and the government of your lives, in some very weighty considerations deducible from thence.

The first thing, therefore, which I have to do, is to attempt the resolution of the principal apocalyptical question concerning the rise of Antichristianism.

Now in order to answer this distinctly (which hath exercised and wearied out all apocalyptical writers hitherto) there are some things I would premise as so many postulata, which generally all are agreed in, and which Mr. Mede, Dr. More, Mr. Durham, and Dr. Cressener, have irrefragably proved. 1. That the revelation contains * the series of all the remarkable events and changes of the state of the Christian church to the end of the world. 2. That † mystical Babylon, or the great whore described there, doth signify, Rome in an anti-christian church state. 3. That therefore this cannot be Rome pagan properly, but Rome papal. 4. That the ‡ seven heads of the beast, or the seven kings, are the seven forms of government, which obtained successively among the Romans: and

* Rev. iv. 1 and x. 5, 6, 7. † Rev. xvii. 1, 5, 18.
‡ Rev. xvii. 10, 11.

seeing the * sixth of these was that which was only in being in John's time (the former five having fallen before): that therefore consequently the seventh head, which under another consideration is called the eighth, (the intervenient kingdom of the Ostro-Goths being the seventh in number, though not properly Roman, and therefore, in that sense, none of the heads of the Roman government) is the last species of government, and that which is called most peculiarly, and by a speciality the Beast, or Antichrist.

These postulata being supposed as certain (which I would reckon no difficult thing to prove, were it needful), I must in the next place, premise two preliminary considerations, before I come directly to answer the question itself.

The first is this: that the three grand Apocalyptical numbers of 1260 days, forty-two months, and time, times and a half, are not only synchronical, but must be interpreted prophetically, so as years must be understood by days.

That these three numbers are synchronical, will appear plain to any impartial considerer, that will be at pains to compare them, as we have them set down in this book of the Revelation—viz., the 1260 days, chap. xi. 3, and chap. xii. 6; the forty-two months, chap. xii. 2, and chap. xiii. 5; and the time, times, and a half, chap. xii. 14. For it is clear, that the Gentiles treading down the holy city forty-two months, chap. xii. 2, is the cause of the witnesses prophesying for 1260 days in sackcloth, ver. 3. And is the woman or church's being in the wilderness for the same term of days, chap. xii. 6, any other than a new representation of the witnesses' prophesying in sackcloth? Seeing this must be while the Beast is worshipped and served by the whole Roman

* Rev. xvii. 10, 11.

world, during men's lunacy of forty-two months' continuance, chap. xiii. 5. And therefore seeing the woman is said to be in the wilderness-state of desolation and persecution for a time, and times, and half a time, in order thus to be preserved from the Beast and Serpent, as we see chap. xii. 14. It is likewise plain that this number of three years and a half must be the very same with the two former numbers. Only it is to be observed by the way, that this period of time, when it is mentioned in relation to the church, is spoken of with respect to the sun, either as to his diurnal or annual rotation; whereas when it is described in relation to the Beast's unstable kingdom of night and darkness, it is made mention of with respect to the inconstant luminary, which changes its face continually, while it makes our months; and hence it is that the church is represented, chap. xii. 1. under the emblem of a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet.

Now, as these numbers are synchronical, and the same, so it is easy to prove that they must be understood prophetically for years. I shall not insist here upon the conjecture of * a learned man, that there was no diurnal rotation of the earth before the fall, and consequently no days of twenty-four hours, but only an annual rotation of this our planetary world: which he gives us as the original reason of the Scripture's putting days for years frequently. For whatsoever be in this, it is plain that the Scripture speaks thus in several places; by putting a lesser number figuratively for a greater, as well as a definite one for an indefinite. Witness the appointment of the week of years, Exod. xxxiii. 10, 11. which is spoken of as if it were a week of days, ver. 12, the seventh year of which is therefore called Sabbatical, with respect to the seventh day, Sabbath. In the same

* Whiston's Theory of the Earth, p. 8, 79, 81. See Hypoth. 3.

way of speaking, Ezekiel was commanded to lie 390 days on his left side, and forty on his right, each day for a year, as God himself says, chap. iv. 5, 6. So likewise, God punished the murmuring Israelites with forty years' abode in the wilderness, with relation to the forty days that were spent in searching of the land of Canaan. (Numb. xiv. 32.) The seven years of Nebuchadnezzar's lycanthropy, is thus called indefinitely, days or times. (Dan. iv. 32, 34.) Nay, our Saviour himself speaks in this dialect, when he calls the years of his ministry days, saying, "I do cures to day, and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." (Luke xiii. 32.) But the most remarkable place to our purpose is the famous prophesy of Daniel's seventy weeks, or 490 days, chap. ix. 24. reaching down from the edict of Artaxerxes Longimanus, in his twentieth year, (Neh. ii. 1—10,) to our Saviour's suffering at Jerusalem; which was exactly 490 prophetical years, not Julian ones. The not distinguishing of which, has hitherto confounded all interpreters, as I might show at large, were this a proper place for it. But what the difference between these is, we shall quickly see.

In the mean time, I am now to prove that the 1260 days are to be understood, in a prophetical sense, for years; for, if I can prove this, it will necessarily follow, that the other numbers must be so interpreted also, since they are the same with this. Now, that the 1260 days cannot be taken literally, but prophetically, will appear from hence: That it is impossible to conceive how so many great and wonderful actions, which are prophesied to fall out in that short time, could happen during the space of three solar years and a half; such as, the obtaining power over all kindreds, tongues, and nations—the world's wondering at, and submitting unto the beast's reign—and the setting up an image to the imperial head, and causing it to be worshipped instead of the living

emperor's, &c. And besides these things, seeing the 1260 days are the whole time of the papal authority, which is not to be totally destroyed until the great and remarkable appearance of Christ, upon the pouring out of the seventh vial; and that therefore Christ will have the honour of destroying him finally himself (though this iniquity began to work even in the apostolical times): therefore we may certainly conclude that it must take some centuries of years to carry on this abomination that maketh desolate. For though the Lord will gradually consume or waste this great adversary by the spirit of his mouth, yet he will not sooner abolish him than by the appearing of his own presence. (2 Thes. ii. 8.) As * I choose both to render and understand the words.

The second preliminary consideration is, That, in order to understand the prophetical years aright, we

* The learned Dr. Whitby, in his late Paraphrase and Commentary upon the Epistles, does indeed advance a new notion on this verse and chapter—viz. that the Jewish sanhedrim, government and nation, is primarily and chiefly understood here by the apostle, as the Man of Sin and Antichrist, both upon the account of their opposing themselves to Christ and persecuting of his followers, and upon the account also of their rebelling against the Romans. And he has said so much for the proof of this, that it may be thought to contain a refutation of my interpretation of the place. But even upon the supposition that all the Dr. says for his opinion should be true; yet it will be found no way to invalidate what I advance here. For all that are acquainted with the Jewish and Apostolical writings, know, that besides a first sense to be observed in prophecies there is a second and remoter one more tacitly insinuated frequently as the principal design of the Spirit of God. I might show this in innumerable instances, especially in the ancient prophecies that relate to David, or some other person, in the first sense, or typical one, but in the Messiah ultimately and completely. But I shall not insist upon any thing of this kind now, seeing so many have done it already: and there is no need to do it here, seeing Dr. Whitby himself doth grant all I desire, when he says in his preface to this epistle, page 383, "But that I may not wholly differ from my brethren in this matter, I grant these

must reduce them to Julian years, or such as are in use with us now in Europe.

This is no idle or chimerical inquiry; seeing the ignorance of this has misled all our great apocalyptical men hitherto in their calculations, and yet unless we are able to adjust the difference between prophetical and Julian years, we must still reckon at a venture, without any certainty of the truth and exactness of our arithmetic. Therefore, that we may understand this difference, we are to remember, that the ancients were far more rude and indistinct in their calculation of time than we have been since; and indeed, such is their confusion this way, that we are obliged to God's providence in giving us the exact compass of a prophetical year, even in this book, by fixing the synchronism of the three numbers above-mentioned. For by these it is determined, that thirty days make a month, and twelve of such months, a year. So that 1260 days being divided into three years and a half (or time, and times, and a half, in the apocalyptical dialect), 360 days must make up a year, without the additional five days and odd hours and minutes, that are added in the calculation of the Julian year. For the Julian (and Gregorian) months consisting, some of thirty, and some of thirty-one days, (excepting February only) and the years consequently of 365 days, there must needs be some considerable difference in the revolution of many centuries; which difference appears still greater if we consult the curious astronomical calculations

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words may, in a secondary sense (in which expression I only differ from the Dr. seeing I look upon it to be the principal sense, because it is the second), be attributed to the Papal Antichrist, or Man of Sin, and may be signally fulfilled in him, in the destruction of him by the Spirit of Christ's mouth, he being the successor to the apostate Jewish church, to whom these characters agree, as well as to her, and, therefore, in the Annotations I have still given a place to this interpretation also."

of Petavius, Tycho, Kepler, and others. But since their exactness hath only added five hours to every year (together with some minutes, firsts, seconds, &c. *comminibus annis*, which they themselves are not fully agreed in) I shall not be so nice upon this point, as to follow them exactly in all their criticisms this way. However, since five minutes additional to a year, arise to an entire day in the revolution of 163 years, it ought not to be altogether neglected. But passing even these, and considering only the five days that are added to the 360, in our ordinary years, we will find that the 1260 days in the Revelation being reduced to years, are eighteen years short of Julian years, in the prophetical reckoning, by reason of the additional days turned into years in the ordinary accounts now, above the apocalyptical reckoning. To demonstrate which, I present you with the following scheme:—

	The Prophetical Year.	The Julian Year.
One	360	365
	360	365
Two	720	730
Three	1080	1095
Half	180	183
Three years and a half	1260	1278

Now if, according to this computation, we subtract 1260 apocalyptical years from 1278 Julian or Gregorian ones, (I call them so, *ore rotundo*, overlooking the smaller measures of time,) there remain eighteen years to be cut off.

To apply this therefore to our design: If we may suppose that Antichrist began his reign in the year 606, the additional 1260 years of his duration, were they Julian or ordinary years, would lead us down to the year 1866, as the last period of the seven-headed monster. But seeing they are prophetical years only, we must cast away eighteen years, in order to bring them to the exact

measure of time which the Spirit of God designs in this book. And thus, the final period of papal usurpations (supposing that he did indeed rise in the year 606) must conclude with the year 1848.

And now that I have hinted at the time of Antichrist's rise, as the conclusion of the preliminary considerations, I must proceed to prove this to be, in one sense, the true era of the papal beast's reign. And here it is, that I find myself extremely straitened, in discoursing of so great a subject in so narrow a compass. All, therefore, that I can say here, will amount to a few short hints only, though perhaps no inconsiderable ones.

Seeing therefore, as I said before, in the 4th postulatum, it is plain from Rev. xvii. 10, that the imperial government was the regnant head of the Roman beast, at the time of the vision; we have only the two following heads to consider, as to their rise and duration. Let these things, therefore, be minded here.

1. That the seventh head, or king of Rome, (as I hinted before,) whose character is, that he was immediately to succeed to the imperial government, and to continue but a short space (Rev. xvii. 10)—that, I say, this government could be no other than that of the kingdom of the Ostro-Goths in Italy.

For it is plain that the imperial dignity was extinguished in Italy, and in the western parts of the empire, by Odoacer, the king of the Heruli, who forced Augustulus, the last sprig of an emperor, to abdicate his throne and power in the year 475, or 476, as others say. And though this Odoacer was soon destroyed by Theodoric, the king of the Ostro-Goths; yet the same form of regal government was continued by Theodoric and his successors. And though this kingdom continued for nearly eighty years, reckoning from Odoacer to Teias, yet the angel might justly call this a short time: for so it was, if compared either with the preceding imperial or succeed-

ing papal government. Which suggests a very strong argument against some who would make this seventh king denote the Oriental empire, which, as it began long before this time, so lasted many centuries afterwards, and was not totally extinct till Mahomet the Great's time, in the year 1453. And surely this kingdom was sufficient to constitute a new head of the Roman people, seeing Rome and Italy was subjected entirely to those Gothish kings, and that they not only acted with the same authority that the emperors had used before (excepting that they abstained from that title by a special providence, that they might not be confounded with that government), but were owned by the senate and people of Rome as their superiors, yea, by the emperors of the East also; as might easily be proved from * historians, particularly Cassiodorus,† who was chief minister of state to two of those kings.

Whence it doth plainly appear, that this kingdom of the Ostro-Goths, was the seventh head, that was to continue a short time; and that therefore, it follows—1. That the change wrought by Constantine the Great, both as to the seat and religion of the empire, could not be looked upon as a new head, seeing the old government in all other respects was continued. And, 2. Neither can any person justly suppose that the form of the government was altered, when the empire was divided into the East and West, seeing in all other respects also, the imperial authority and rule was preserved. Therefore, 3. It follows also, that the papal government was not regnant until the destruction of this Gothish kingdom in Italy, for there could not be two supreme heads of Rome at the same time.

* See Baron. ad Ann. 472, 475, &c. Petav. Ration. Temp. Lib. 7. cap. 5. Bellarm. de Translat. Imp. Rom. Lib. 1. cap. 9, &c.

† In Lib. Variarum. Lib. 1. Ep. 23, 31, &c. Lib. 4. Ep. 45. &c. Lib. 3. Ep. 16, 18. Lib. 8. Ep. 2, 3, 4, &c.

Therefore, 2. We may conclude that the last head of the beast, which is the papal, did arise either immediately upon the extirpation of the Gothish kingdom, or some time after; but it could not rise to its power immediately after, seeing Justinian did by the conquest of Italy revive the imperial government again there, which by that means was healed after the deadly wound which the Heruli and the Goths had given it. Though, I confess, Justinian's conquests of Italy laid a foundation for the Pope's rise; and paved the way for his advancement, both by the penal and sanguinary laws which he made against all those that dissented from the Romish church, and by the confusions that followed upon Narsus, his bringing in the Lombards. For, during the struggles of them and the Exarchat, the Pope played his game so, that the emperor Phocas found it his interest to engage him to his party, by giving him the title of supreme and universal bishop.

Therefore we may justly reckon that the papal head took its first rise from that remarkable year 606; when Phocas did, in a manner, devolve the government of the West upon him, by giving him the title of universal bishop. From which period, if we date the 1260 years, they lead us down (as I said already) to the year 1866, which is 1848, according to prophetical calculation. Or, if a bare title of this sort be not thought sufficient to constitute the Pope head of the Beast, we may reckon this two years later, viz., from the year 608, when Boniface the 4th did first publicly authorize idolatry, by dedicating the Pantheon to the worship of the Virgin Mary and all the Saints.

Now it is very remarkable, that in the year 666, Pope Vitalian did first ordain that all public worship should be in Latin; and therefore, however the notion of Irenæus *

* Iræn. adv. Hæret. Lib. 5. cap. 30.

has been of late ridiculed, who observed that the characteristical number of the beast, viz., 666, answering to the number of a man's name, was to be found in the word Λατεινος, from whence he concluded that he was to be a Roman, I cannot but think that there is something remarkable in this, (even though the numerical letters of other words should jump with this number also,) not so much because of the antiquity of the notion, as upon the account of the reason he suggests to us for this, when he says, that though he grants that other names (as that of ευανθας) may be so rendered, yet he fixed upon this, because the * Latin monarchy is the last of all, and there-

* It ought to be observed here, that not only the Greek word, but even the Hebrew contains the number 666 in the numerical letters thereof; whether we make use of דומיית *Romana* scil. *Sedes*, or דמענוש *Romanus* vel. *Latinus*. As will appear from the following scheme.

ד	200	ד	200	λ	50
ו	6	מ	40	α	1
מ	40	ע	70	τ	300
י	10	נ	50	ε	5
י	10	ו	6	ι	10
ה	400	ש	300	ν	50
	666		666	ο	70
				ς	200
					666

And whereas Bellarmin objects, that *Latinus* should be rendered by a single *Iota*, and not by *ei*—he is exceedingly mistaken: for not only Irenæus renders the word thus, but all the Greeks do the same, as is plain in innumerable instances, such as in the names Αντονεινος, Σαβεινος, which the Romans pronounce *Antoninus*, *Sabinus*. Nay, the ancient Romans spake the same way as the Greeks, as is plain in *Plautus* and the Fragments of *Ennius*, with whom, nothing is more common than *queis* for *quis*, *preimus* for *primus*, *capteivei* for *capivi*, *lateinei* for *latini*, &c.

fore the beast must relate to this or none. Wherein I suppose, he alludes to Daniel's account of the four monarchies, (chap. ii. 7.) And indeed, the little horn that arose out of the head of the fourth beast, (chap. vii. 8,) seems not unfitly to represent, not only Antiochus Epiphanes, but the papal Antichrist, whose type he may therefore be supposed to be. For, as he supplanted three kings, in allusion to which, that little horn is said to have plucked up three horns before it by the roots: so did the papal government rise also upon the ruins of the Exarchat, the Lombards, and the authority of the emperors in Italy.

I believe this account of Antichrist's rise will not be very acceptable to some, whose zeal for the pope's downfal has made them entertain hope of living to see that remarkable time; which has made them invent plausible schemes to prove that this great enemy was seated in his regal dignity long before the year 606. But if a man will trace truth impartially, he will have reason to think, that the rise of this adversary could not be before that time. Nay, I must tell you, that I do not reckon the full rise of the pope to the headship of the empire till a later date still. For though the pope got the title of universal bishop at that time, yet he was afterwards, for a long time, subject, in temporal concerns, to the emperors. And, therefore, I cannot reckon him to have been, in a proper and full sense, head of Rome, until he was so in a secular, as well as ecclesiastical sense. And this was not until the days of Pepin, by whose consent he was made a secular prince, and a great part of Italy given to him as Peter's patrimony. So that as Boniface the third (and his successors), by assuming the title of universal bishop, was the forerunner of Antichrist, as Gregory the great prophesied he would be, who should be known in the world by that proud title: So, likewise, we may conclude that Anti-

christ was indeed come, when Paul the first became a temporal prince also. Phocas, therefore, did only proclaim the pope to be the last head of Rome, in the apocalyptical sense; but it was Pepin who gave him the solemn investiture, and seated him on his throne, which Charlemagne did afterwards confirm to him.

Now, as near as I can trace the time of this donation of Pepin, it was in or about the year 758, about the time that Pope Paul the first began to build the church of St. Peter and St. Paul. Now, if we make this the era of the Papal kingdom, the 1260 years will not run out before the year 2018, according to the computation of Julian years; but, reducing these to prophetical ones, the expiration of the papal kingdom ends exactly in the year 2000, according to our vulgar reckoning. And if what I suggested above be true, that Antichrist shall not be finally destroyed until the coming of Christ, then may this calculation be looked upon to be very considerable. For it has been a very ancient opinion, that the world would last only six thousand years; that, according to the old traditional prophecy of the house of Elias, the world should stand as many millenaries as it was made in days; and that, therefore, as there were two thousand years from the creation to Abraham, without a written directory of religion, and two thousand from thence to Christ, under the old economy of the law, so there would be two thousand years more under the Messiah. So that after the militant state of the Christian church is run out, in the year 2000, it is to enter upon that glorious sabbatical millenary, when the saints shall reign on the earth, in a peaceable manner, for a thousand years more. After the expiration of which, Satan shall be let loose to play a new game, and men shall begin to apostatize almost universally from the truth, gathering themselves together, under the character of Gog and Magog, from the four corners or

parts of the world, until they have reduced the church to a small compass. But when they have brought the saints to the last extremity, Christ himself will appear in his glory, and destroy his enemies with fire from heaven (Rev. xx. 9); which denotes the great conflagration (2 Pet. iii. 10, &c.); which is followed with the resurrection, and Christ's calling men before him into judgment. And, perhaps, the time of this judgment will take up the greatest part or the whole of another millenary of years; that, as there were four thousand years from the creation to his first coming, there may be four from thence to his triumphant entry into heaven with all his saints. For though the Scripture call this time a day, yet we know what Peter says, that a thousand years and a day are the same thing in Divine reckoning (2 Pet. iii. 8). But that all men that ever lived should be publicly judged in a day, or year, or century, so as to have all their life and actions tried and searched into, is to me, I confess, inconceivable, not indeed in relation to God, but in relation to men and angels, who must be convinced of the equity of the procedure and sentence of the Judge.

But to return, I cannot forbear to take notice of one thing here, that the year 758 was the year 666 from the persecution of Domitian, when John was in Patmos, and wrote this book (as Tertullian, Irenæus, Origen, Eusebius, Jerom, and all the ancients, excepting Epiphanius, tell us, which, though some say was A. C. 95, was most probably in or about the year 92, the persecution of Domitian having begun two years before. So that here we have another characteristic mark of the number of the beast.

And now, I hope, I have said enough of the future part of time, as to the general idea which, I think, the Revelation gives of it. But I must proceed one step further with you, and consider under what revolution of

time we are at present; that we may thence see what we are to expect, and how we are to act.

So that here I find myself insensibly taken off from any further direct prosecution of the question proposed by way of answer thereunto. And,

Therefore, II. I proceed to improve what I have said as to this question, both theoretically and practically.

And, 1st, I shall advance something here, as a theoretical improvement of what I have said upon the former head. For by this key, we may attain, in a great measure, to unlock the dark apocalyptical periods and times: those, I mean, that relate to the continuance of the Papal power, both as to his gradual growth and increase first, and his decay afterwards, until his last and final destruction. And, in relation to these, the far greatest part of the Apocalypse must be understood.

Now, in order to this performance, I must premise this one thing: viz., that the seven seals, trumpets, and vials (in which is contained the order and series of the whole apocalyptical prophecy, and to the explication and illustration of which, all the other particular visions are subservient); that, I say, these are joined together by the link of the seventh seal, and seventh trumpet; so as the seventh seal doth, as it were, produce or include the seven trumpets, and the seventh trumpet the seven vials, in the same manner.

This I should reckon no difficult thing to demonstrate, but that it would be too long to insist upon it in this place. And seeing Mr. Durham has done it, in a great measure, already, I pass it now the more easily. Only let me desire you to consider, that it was not until after the opening of the seventh seal, that John saw the angels with the seven trumpets (chap. viii. 1, 2). And that it was after the sounding of the seventh trumpet also that he tells us, he saw αλλο σημειον μεγα και θαυμασον, another sign, great and wonderful (chap. xv. 1), which was the vision of the vials. So that I wonder

that Mr. Mede, Dr. More, and almost all others, have suffered themselves to be confounded in their interpretations, by reason of their not observing this, and, consequently, by jumbling some of the trumpets with the seals, and most of the vials with the trumpets.

Now, this being supposed, we will find the series of time run in the following order, according to this threefold septenary of periods, which do insensibly run out one into the other.

The first septenary of seals relates to the Christian church, during the state of the Roman empire. And these do accordingly run in this order.

The first seal exhibits the state of the church, under the conduct of a glorious Rider on a white horse, having a bow in his hand, and a crown given unto him, who went out conquering and to conquer (chap. vi. 2). Under which emblem Christ himself is represented, going forth upon his conquests over Jews and Gentiles. And, as this relates to Christ's first victory over his enemies, after his commission to his disciples, to preach the gospel to all nations (Matt. xxviii. 18—20), and the pouring down of his Spirit for this end, on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.); so the full completion of it is not till the end of time. For after all other horsemen and enemies of the church have done their utmost against Christ and his people, we find this Horseman leading them all in triumph as his captives, and proceeding in his conquests to make a full and final end of them. For which see chap. xix. 11, 12, &c. So that this seal begins with A.D. 33 or 34, and does not end till the end of time, as to its full completion. But if we reckon it only in relation to the beginning of the next seal (Christ's conquests being darkened, as to the outward view of men, by what follows), we shall see that immediately.

The second seal (chap. vi. 3, 4), under the emblem of a rider upon a red horse (who had a great sword given

him, in order to take peace from the earth, and to engage men in wars), represents the state of the empire from the time that Nero made war on the Jews, A.D. 66; and so contains the civil wars of Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, when men did so remarkably kill one another; and the wars of Vespasian and Titus against the Jews, completed afterwards by the terrible destruction of that nation under Hadrian; together with his other wars, and the preceding persecutions of Domitian and Trajan, and the conquests of this last prince. So that, as this begins with A. D. 66, it ends with Hadrian's wars in 134, or with his life, 138.

The third seal (chap. vi. 5, 6) begins, therefore, with A. D. 138; where, under the hieroglyphic of a rider on a black horse, with a pair of balances in his hand, to weigh and measure all things exactly, is set forth the excellent reigns of the admirable Antonines, Pius and Philosophus. And, therefore, this seal runs out in the year 180.

The fourth seal (chap. vi. 7, 8) represents the Roman horse turned pale, and the rider changed from a grave and awful judge to a murderer, so as to be called Death, by reason of his throwing so many into Hades, or the future state, by immature deaths. Where we have a very remarkable account of the state of the Roman empire, after the decease of the brave Antoninus Philosophus, under the barbarities of Commodus, the short-lived reigns of Pertinax and Didius Julianus, but especially under the severe and bloody Septimus Severus, in his wars against Perscennius Nigerius, Albinus, and others, and under his son Caracalla; and, afterwards, under Macrinus, Heliogabulus (the reign of the excellent Alexander Severus being but a short breathing to the empire and the Christians), Maximinus, and his son Pupienus, Balbinus and Gordianus, and Philippus and his son; with whose death, I think, this seal runs out, in the year 250. And with the death of these Philippi,

who favoured Christianity, the four Evangelical living Creatures (which our translation renders Beasts, most unaccountably) cease to speak openly.

The fifth seal, therefore, discovers the state of the Christian church to be exceedingly languishing and melancholy, as if the saints were all slain, praying and crying for vengeance against their persecutors, while they are represented as lying under the altar, (chap. vi. 9, 10, 11.) So that this period begins with Decius, the first universal persecutor of Christians (for all the former persecutions under Nero, Domitian, Trajan, and the Antonines, were but provincial ones, and that of Maximinus against the ministers only), who began his reign and persecution together in the year 250, and was seconded in it by Valerian (for the short reigns of Trebonianus, Gallus, and Æmilianus, hardly deserve to be taken notice of in this case). Now, the souls of the martyrs are desired to rest patiently, until the confused reign of Galienus should run out, and the thirty tyrants that rose in his time should be cut off, together with the short-lived Claudius Gothicus; seeing, after that little interval, their brethren were also to suffer still further under Rome pagan—viz., under Aurelian, and afterwards (when the short reigns of Tacitus, Probus, Carus, and Carinus should be over,) under the cruel persecution raised against them by Dioclesian and Maximianus, elder and younger, together with Severus and Maximinus. So that this seal ends with the conclusion of this last persecution begun by Dioclesian, and so expires, A.D. 306.

The sixth seal, (chap. vi. 12,—17,) gives us an account of God's gracious answer, at length, to the prayer of the slain witnesses, in the destruction of Roman pagan, after their cup was made full by the last cruel persecution; and this is described, as if heaven and earth were come to an end. For so the prophets use to represent the ruin of kingdoms and monarchies, as we see among other places,

(Jer. iv. 24; Isa. xiii. 10, and xxiv. 21, 23; Joel ii. 10.) So that this seal contains the great and terrible wars of Constantine the Great, against all those last tyrants, from the year 306, to the death of the last pagan emperor, Licinius, A.D. 324.

The seventh seal, therefore (chap. viii. 1), represents the short breathing of the church, and peace of the Christians under Constantine, from the year 313, when he first published an edict in their favour; and particularly from the death of Licinius, A.D. 324, to his own decease, in the year 337, immediately upon which the scene alters: And then begins

The second septenary of trumpets, which gives us an account of the state of the church, in relation to the gradual growth and increase of her antichristian enemies, though in a way, also, of judgment upon them: which I represent to you in the following series and order.

The first trumpet, (chap. viii. 7,) began a little after Constantine's death, in the wars between his eldest and youngest son, or at the death of the first in battle, and of the last by the usurpation of Magnentius, which was a kind of mixed storm of hail, fire, and blood. The continuance of it was in the persecutions against the orthodox by Constantius and Valens, with the intervention of that against all Christians by Julian the apostate. And the conclusion of it seems to be the usurpation of Maximus, upon the death of Gratianus, and afterwards the death of Valentinian the Second, and finally the wars and death of Theodosius; so that it began with the year 339, and ended A.D. 395.

The second trumpet, (chap. viii. 8, 9,) represents a great kingdom, under the emblem of a mountain, (see Jer. li. 25,) burning with fire (i. e. in a cruel and fierce manner),and thrown into the midst of the body politic, or empire of Rome, represented by the sea, (see chap. xviii. 15,) by which the third part of it became blood;

by which we are, unquestionably, to understand the irruption of the barbarous nations of the Vandals and Goths into the Roman dominions. This began about the death of Theodosius, and made a formidable progress (A.D. 405) in the days of Arcadius and Honorius, by Radagisus, and afterwards Alaricus, who took Rome, (A.D. 410); and it was continued during the inroads of Athaulphus the Goth (who pillaged the great city, A.D. 414,) and of Gensericus the Vandal, and of Attila the Hun into Italy, and other Roman provinces, which they and others about that time wasted miserably, to the year 355, and afterwards to the year 476.

The third trumpet (chap. viii. 10, 11), doth plainly represent the destruction of the Western empire, by a star falling from the heaven of its glory, as a burning lamp. For after it had struggled with its fatal destiny, under the obscure Cæsars, Avitus Majoranus, Severus, &c. it did at length expire with Augustulus (A.D. 475 or 476). This star was called Wormwood, because of the bitter troubles this brought upon the empire. For the Ostro-Goths planted themselves in Italy, and reigned as arbitrarily as the emperors had ever done. So that this period began with the kingdom of the Ostro-Goths, A.D. 476, and ended with it, A.D. 553.

The fourth trumpet (chap. viii. 12,) brings yet further desolations on Rome, by darkening its splendour and glory, represented by the eclipsing of the sun, for a third part of it, and the moon and stars also, in a like manner; by which we are to understand, no doubt, the decay of the imperial power and authority in the West, by the Lombards, and the Exarchat afterwards. So that this trumpet lasted from the year 568, to the year 758, when Pepin made the pope, in a manner, king of Rome (who, in requital of his kindness, gave his son Charlemagne, the empty title of Emperor of Rome; making thus the succeeding western empire an image of the ancient one,

Rev. xiii. 14, 15), by which both the power of the Lombards, of the Exarchat, and the Emperors did, as it were, terminate in him; and as the Exarchat ended A.D. 752, so the Lombards were totally expelled Italy a little after—viz., 773.

Now follows a threefold woe, which makes up the subject of the three following trumpets, which are therefore called the woe-trumpets, because of the remarkableness of these judgments above the former. Therefore,

The fifth trumpet, (chap. ix. 1—11,) brings forth the first woe. The description of which is long, and the figures many, so that I cannot be supposed to say much on so large a head here: let a short account satisfy you. In the first place, therefore, we are to understand, that no other than the bishop of Rome can be meant by the star that fell from heaven. For this is the symbol of the gospel ministry, (chap. i. 20,) and agrees not, therefore, with Mahomet. Neither can the place this star fell from, viz. heaven, which denotes the glorious and holy state of the church, agree to any other, than one that apostatizeth from the service of Christ to the service of the world and Satan. So that, as ancient Babylon is said to fall from the heaven of temporal glory, as Lucifer, or the morning star of the nations, (Isa. xiv. 12,) so is the bishop of Rome said to fall from the spiritual heaven of his primitive glory and purity; being degenerated from the first angel of light in the church, to be the grand angel of darkness, and becoming thus, the prince of incarnate devils—the key of the bottomless pit (which he and his followers boast of, as the keys of St. Peter) being put into his hand by the old Serpent, for carrying on the black designs of hell. 2. The dark pitchy smoke that came out of the pit upon his opening it, was certainly designed to signify the ignorance that did then prevail in the world, and thegross and horrid errors that were spread abroad and

vended for Divine truths by the sottish monks, that then swarmed abroad under various names and leaders; and particularly the idolatry that then began to prevail universally in the world. For, about that time, though several of the Greek emperors did stiffly oppose image worship, yet the popes did at length prevail, though multitudes on both sides lost their lives in this quarrel. 3. The locusts that came out of this smoke, were the Saracens that followed Mahomet, who compiled the model of his religion, by the help of Jews and Christian heretics, especially of Sergius, a Nestorian monk, whom the Arabian and Turkish writers call Bahira.* These Arabian locusts (whose hegyra or era is dated from Mahomet's flight from Mecca, A.D. 622, a little after the pope got the title of Universal Bishop, A.D. 606) did, in a little time, so increase, that they conquered or overran a great many countries in a very little time. For they overflowed Persia, Syria, Egypt, Palestine, and other places, about the year 729. They extended their arms into India in 643, and into Spain, in 711, and ravaged several parts of France from 721, to the year 726, till they were routed at length, with great slaughter, by Charles Martel, about the year 728. However, they continued after that, to be a scourge to the Christians, especially under the reign of the great Almanzor, until about the year 772, when the Turks began to grow famous.† So that the five months, or 150 years, wherein they tormented the Christians (though they had no power to destroy their empire) was from A. D. 622 to 722. But we must not imagine that these five months or years are the period of this trumpet; for this must be reckoned from 758 to 1067 or thereabouts, when Tangrolipix the Turk, put an end to the Saracen empire by conquering the Caliph

* See Dr. Prideaux, his Life of Mahomet, page 45 to 48.

† See the Authors of the Turkish History, put out by Conradus Clauserus.

of Persia. Now, therefore, in the fourth place (to pass by the other things observable in this Saracen woe-trumpet), let it be considered, that as the apostate bishop of Rome is called the angel or messenger of the bottomless pit, so Mahomet, the king and prophet of these Saracen locusts, is called Abaddon or Apollyon, (ver. 11,) *i. e.*, a destroyer, as carrying on his religion by sword and violence; from whence, his locust-followers are said (ver. 10) to have stings like scorpions, by which they poisoned the souls of men, if they did at all spare their bodies; for they were, in other respects, swift and strong as horses, and had faces like men, in their reasoning, as well as fighting, for their superstition; adorned with hair like women, appearing soft and insinuating at first view, though armed with lion's teeth, as being fierce and cruel. By reason of which qualifications, they got many victories, and are therefore, represented as crowned with crowns of gold, (ver. 7—9.) But, upon the whole matter, this trumpet, as it supposes the rise of the Saracen empire, from the era of the Hegyra 622, and the begun rise of pope, from the year 606 or 608; so, after five months, or 150 years, *i. e.* to the year 772, the Saracen preparations continued, and the papal, from 606, or 608, or 756, or 758. So that the duration of this begins with 758, and expires, in relation to that part of it that concerns the Saracens, about the year 1060. But in as far as it relates to the popish antichristian party, it is continued down through the next trumpet, and the last. But seeing the Saracens are brought in here as a scourge to the worshippers of the beast, the Turks succeeding them in this work, therefore, the trumpet is denominated from this visible scene of affairs, and we must accordingly suppose that it ends with them.

The sixth trumpet, therefore, which is called the second woe, brings in the Turks upon the stage of the Roman empire; who are represented as four angels or

messengers of judgment, chap. xiii. 13—15, &c., which were bound on the other side of the river Euphrates for a time, but are now let loose to pass that river, and make their inroads into the Roman empire, and to erect themselves into a monarchy upon the ruins of it. Now they are called Four Angels, because they were then divided into four Sultanies or principalities, as their ambassadors told the emperor Justin, in the year 570, as is related by one of the Byzantine historians, and taken notice of by all writers on this head.* For, at their remarkable passing the river Euphrates, they were under the command of Solyman Shahum and his three sons; and when he was drowned in the passage, they brought themselves under four other captains, viz. Otrogules and his three sons; of whom, one was the famous Ottoman, who a little after laid the foundations of that great empire, over which his family keeps the sceptre to this day. They are described as horsemen, for so they generally were, fighting on horseback, for the most part, of which the horse's tail is still a monument, being used as their chief ensign of honour or command. Their number was prodigious, and might be, at that time, perhaps, exactly two hundred thousand thousand, as it seems to be here asserted, for they seldom sent out an army of fewer than a thousand thousand fighting men at once. Their polished breastplates represented fire, when shone upon by the sun; and their horses are said to be like lions, for fierceness. And seeing fire-arms began then to be used in war (of which they had great store, together with cannon of prodigious bigness, which did facilitate their taking of cities, and particularly Constantinople), their shooting these on horseback, is represented as if the fire and smoke and brimstone had come out of their horses'

* See Pocock's Supplem. ad Abul-phar, page 106—108, and Leunclav. Hist. pag. 86.

mouths, their pieces being discharged over their heads. With these they killed the bodies of men; and with their tails, which had heads also, they killed the souls of those poor creatures that were stung or bit with their poisonous doctrines; insomuch that the third part of men, i. e. the third part of the ancient Roman empire (viz. that part which fell to Constantius, when Constantine divided the whole among his three sons) was destroyed and conquered by them. Now, if we inquire into the time of this trumpet, we have an exact calculation given of it. For they are said to be prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year: an hour being ever used indefinitely in this book for a season or period of time, we are accordingly to take it here. But days, years, and months, being used definitely always, we must likewise interpret them so here also. So that the sense of the place is, that the Turks were loosed from Euphrates, as being prepared instruments in the hand of God, for the ruin of the Grecian empire, for a certain hour or season; even for a day, and a month, and a year. For in that period of time they destroyed the Eastern empire. For a prophetical year being 360, and a month 30; these, with the addition of one more, make up the period of 391 years. Now, we took notice before, that in or about the year 1067, i. e. 1062 of prophetical reckoning, Trangrolipix erected the Turkish empire upon the ruins of that of the Saracens. From thence, therefore, if we compute the 391 years, we are led down to the year 1458, according to our ordinary computation; but according to prophetical reckoning, to the remarkable year 1453, when Mahomet the Great took Constantinople, and so erected his own empire upon the ruins of the Grecian. For, as it is very remarkable that John does not make the period of 391 years to be the whole duration of the Turkish empire, but only its preparation for after action, from its first rise to its

highest exaltation; so we see how exactly this is fulfilled in the event; which, therefore, I hope, is no unedifying speculation.

Now, seeing there is a remarkable stop and void, as it were, between the end of the sixth trumpet and the beginning of the seventh, which is filled up with the account of the slaying of the witnesses, in chap. xi., I do humbly conceive, that whatever particular slaughters of the saints were before, or may be afterwards, the great slaughter must have been during that interval of time. For this could not be during the height of the two former woes upon Antichrist and his followers; and much less can it be supposed to be after the sound of the seventh trumpet, and while God's last plagues upon the beast are a-pouring out. I do therefore reckon, that the witnesses who prophesied in sackcloth from the beginning of papal superstitions, were the honest Piedmontois, Albigenses, and Waldenses, who were slain at length, after they had stood the shock of all former attacks, particularly that of Simon Montfort, with his 500,000 Croissades, whom Innocent the 3rd diverted from the Saracen war, in order to extirpate that good people, about the year 1416, when John Huss, and afterward Jerom of Prague were burnt. But came not to its height until the Bohemian Calixtines complied with the council of Basil, A.D. 1434, after which the faithful Taborites were totally ruined, as well as their brethren in Piedmont, France, &c., which happened about the year 1492. For they being destroyed, the Calixtines were no better than the dead carcases (as they are called, ver. 8) or corps of the former living witnesses, over which the popish party did triumph: for they looked upon them as standing trophies of their victory, and therefore did not think fit to kill them further, or bury them out of their sight. For it is said (ver. 7, 8), that after they had finished their testimony, the beast did make war upon them, και αποκτενει αυτους και τα

πτωματα, αυτον, &c. He killed them and their corps also, (for the additional words, in our version, *shall lie*, are not in the original, and do but mar the sense) or their bodies (for some reading have it σωματα), in the streets of the great city, i. e. in Bohemia, one street of the papal dominions, or the great city Rome, in a large sense. For I find that, towards the end of the fifteenth century, the witnesses were in a manner wholly extinct. For * Comenius tells us that about the year 1467, the Waldenses in Austria and Moravia had complied so far as to dissemble their religion, and turn to popery in profession and outward compliance. † The Taborites in the mean time, upon their refusal to do so, were so destroyed, that it was much that seventy of them could get together to consult about continuing their church, and about finding out some qualified person to be their minister, for they had none left, A.D. 1467. And so low was the church of Christ then, that when the hidden remains of the Taborites (who were called Speculani, from their lurking in dens and caves), sent out four men (as the same author relates in another ‡ book, to travel, one through Greece and the East, another to Russia and the North, a third to Thrace, Bulgaria, and the neighbouring places, and a fourth to Asia, Palestine, and Egypt; they did all, indeed, safely return to their brethren, but with this sorrowful news, that they found no church of Christ, that was pure or free from the grossest errors, superstition, and idolatry. This was in the year 1497. And when they sent two of their number two years afterwards—viz. Luke Prage and Thomas German, to go into Italy, France, and other places, to see if there were any of the old Waldenses left alive; they returned with the same

* Hist. Pers. Eccl. Bohem. ch. 20, sect. 4, 5. pag. 70, 71.

† Ibid. ch. 20, sect. 3.

‡ Comenius in his Short History of the Bohemian Church, prefixed to his Exhortation to the Church of England, sect. 66, p. 40.

melancholy news as the former had done, that they could neither find nor hear of any remaining; only they were informed of the martyrdom of Savanarolla (who suffered in the year 1498), and they were told of some few remains of the Piedmontois, that were scattered and hid among the Alps, but nobody knew where. Now, a few years after this, even the few remains of the Taborites were found out and persecuted, hardly any escaping; so that A.D. 1510, six suffered together publicly; and the year following, that famous martyr Andreas Paliwka, who, I think, was the last of that period. From whose death, in the end of the year 1511, or beginning of 1512, to the dawning of the reformation, by the first preaching of Carolastadius and Zuinglius (who appeared at least a year before Luther, as * Hottinger and others tellus), there was only about three years and a half, which answers, as near as can be, to the three days and a half of the unburied state of the witnesses; so that the spirit's entering into the witnesses (ver. 2) began with the year 1516, if not the year before, though this appeared most remarkably when Luther opposed the pope publicly, A.D. 1517. They were not only enlivened, but (to explain the words of John, ver. 2, a little further) they rose upon their feet, A.D. 1529, when so many princes and free cities in Germany, protested against the edict of Worms and Spire, and so got the name of Protestants. They heard a voice from heaven saying, ascend hither, (ver. 12) i. e. to power and peace, when Maurice of Saxony beat the Emperor Charles A.D. 1552; and accordingly they did after that, ascend to the heaven of honour, rest, and security, as if they had been wafted up by a cloud, and that in the sight even of their enemies; when the Protestant religion was established and legally settled and allowed of, in the year 1555, which was continued and confirmed by Maximilian and Rulolph

* Hist. Reform, vol. 1.

afterwards. In whose days the church began to be settled in several other countries—viz., in England, Scotland, Denmark, Swedeland, Switzerland, and the Low Countries. Now, it is observable, that in this period of time, when the witnesses finished their testimony, or were about to do so, the Turks took Constantinople, A.D. 1453; which I take to be designed by the earthquake that destroyed the tenth part of the Roman dominions, (ver. 13,) for the Grecian empire was reduced before that, from being the third part of that empire; so that Mahomet's prevailing over the Greek church, and the pope's conquests over the western Christians was much about a time, and therefore said to be in the same hour or period of time, i. e. before the sixth trumpet ended, and before the seventh began: for the sixth trumpet is the hour of the Turkish woe. And indeed their triumph was much of the same kind also. For as the papists triumphed only over the dead bodies of the witnesses, i. e. over the Calixtines (who were no longer living witnesses, the Taborites being all gone, and having overcome their enemies by their blood, and the word of their testimony), so the Turkish triumph was only over seven thousand names of men, i. e. over the remaining eastern Christians, who were so degenerated in all respects, that they were only names or shadows of true Christians; only, whereas the Grecians did yet own themselves to be the same in profession with their ancestors, and so were the same with them, as to name, the Calixtines were even debarred that privilege.

These things being therefore considered (which I could easily enlarge upon, were I not confined at this time), I think it is abundantly plain, that the great slaughter of the witnesses must have been precisely at the time I have mentioned. For it could not be till Antichrist was at his highest pitch of power and grandeur, which was not before this time; and it was not possible

that it should be after the seventh trumpet sounded, and the vials began to be poured out; seeing the witnesses were not only risen then, but were the instruments of this last and greatest woe to the worshippers of the beast; and, therefore, we find (chap. xi. 14, 15, &c.), that as soon as the witnesses arose the second woe ended, and the third commenced in the begun exaltation of the saints and servants of God; and it is to me altogether inconceivable, that the witnesses should be risen, and the antichristian interest decline; and yet that the witnesses should be entirely cut off during such a period, so that I am almost bold on this head (though I am resolved to propose my apocalyptical thoughts only by way of probable conjecture), to affirm that it is impossible, morally speaking, that the witnesses can ever be so entirely slain, as they have been before, whatever particular and provincial persecutions they may be under for a time, and whatever formidable appearances there may be against the Protestant interest every where. Against this assertion I can foresee no objection of moment, excepting one, and this is, that seeing the witnesses are said to prophesy all the 1260 days of the beast's reign, in sackcloth, and to be slain only when they have finished their testimony, (ver. iii. 7), it seems, therefore, very strange to say, that they shall be slain during the time of their 1260 days' or years' prophesy, and so long before the end of them. To which I answer, that in ver. 3 there are two things spoken of with respect to the opposers of Antichrist; the first is, that they are called witnesses or martyrs, against the abominations of that enemy; and the second is, that they are said to preach or prophesy against that interest. Now, it is only in the second sense that they are spoken of, in relation to the whole 1260 days; so that though the προφητεια, or witness-bearing of the saints, continue, in a large and general sense, for 1260 years (and that, for the most part, in sackcloth, because

of the constant troubles they meet with from that restless enemy), yet their μαρτυρια, or witness-bearing by martyrdom and sufferings, in a strict and proper sense, relates only to the time of their low and obscure state, during the rage of the papists, before the sounding of the seventh trumpet. Now, it is not said (though perhaps, this was never taken notice of before), that the witnesses were killed after their whole prophesy or preaching was over, or after the 1260 days were run out; but only, that after their μαρτυρια, or testimony for Christ, by suffering was over, that then, I say, they were universally slain and cut off (ver. 7). Now, though there have been many persecutions since the reformation, and the sounding of the seventh trumpet, yet they were never universal ones. Besides, that the difference is great, between the witnesses before and since that time, in this respect: for since Luther's appearing, our religion has been established publicly in several nations, and authorized by law in opposition to popery, which it never was before. But, to proceed,

The seventh Trumpet sounds, chap. xi. 14, &c., immediately upon the end of the sixth, *i. e.*, upon the rising of the witnesses. Now, as the 13th and 14th chapters are but further representations of the state of affairs under the six Trumpets preceding, relating to the condition both of the church and anti-christian party; so the 15th and 16th chapters are preliminary to the period of the seven vials being poured out upon the papacy and its dominions. Of which visions I have a great many things to say, but I must curb myself now, lest I prove too tedious. I shall, therefore, only put you in mind of what I hinted before, that the seventh trumpet comprehends the seven vials. For these are but the parts of it, which gradually destroy the papal interest, which had increased under the former trumpets. As, therefore, this period brings in reformation, and by various steps,

makes the kingdoms of the world (which, before, were under Antichrist), to change so far and so wonderfully, as to become the kingdoms of God and Christ (chap. xi. 14, &c.;) so, after a general, but glorious, account of the state of the church from the reformation (chap. xiv.), and a general account of the vials to be poured out on the popish party during the same period (chap. xv.), we have a distinct account of the pouring out of these seven vials (chap. xvi.), in obedience to the great voice out of the temple, (ver. 1,) which is but a repetition of the sounding of the seventh trumpet, (chap. xi. 14,) under a new representation of it.

The third and last septenary, therefore, is that of the vials, or last plagues and judgments upon Rome papal; which, as far as I can, I shall explain, by a distinct account of such of them as I reckon to be fulfilled, and by some few conjectures upon the remaining ones.

But before I proceed to the particular consideration of these, there are two things which I would premise. The first is, that as the trumpets did raise Antichrist up, and the vials must pull him down, so there is a wonderful relation that the last bear to the former, especially the four first ones. For the first trumpet and first vial, bring judgments on the earth, the second trumpet and vial on the sea, the third trumpet and vial on the rivers, and the fourth trumpet and vial on the sun. The second is this, that seeing the vials do suppose a struggle and war between the popish and reformed parties, every vial is to be looked upon as the event and conclusion of some new periodical attack of that first party upon this other; the issue of which, proves at length, favourable to the latter against the former. Which seeing it is the most noble and remarkable part of the period that the vial relates to, is therefore that which denominates the period itself; even as the conquest of Pompey by Cæsar, and of Antony by Augustus, suppose their wars before, and give

the denomination to their governments. These things being premised, I now proceed.

The first vial, which fell upon the earth, to the tormenting of the subjects of the beast, (chap. xvi. 2,) doth denote God's judgments upon the foundations of the papal power; the earth being that on which we walk and build our houses, and out of whose womb we are maintained. So that by this I understand the popish clergy and the papal dominions and revenues, as they are upheld by them. This, therefore, began with the reformation, and continued until the time that the popish factors and trumpery were thrown out of as many countries of Europe as embraced the reformation. And we may easily conceive what a mortification this was to that party, when the pretended sanctity of their priests, monks and nuns, was found to be mere cheat, and their miracles nothing else but lies or legerdemain; and when their tales of purgatory were exposed to public contempt, and their pardons and indulgences would sell no longer; and consequently, when the pope and his red-hatted and mitred officers saw themselves driven out of so great a part of their dominions—their seminaries for breeding their motley soldiers, of all denominations and orders, pulled down—and so much of their yearly revenues lost. Whence they are said to fall under a noisome and grievous *ulcer*, or sore; being this way pained and vexed inwardly, and rendered contemptible to the whole world, that looked upon them as no better than vermin, and the plagues of mankind. So that this vial began with the rise of Zuinglius and Luther and the other reformers, in the year 1516 and 1517, and continued to the year 1566, *i. e.*, about forty years: for by that time all the reformed churches were settled, and had published their creeds and confessions against Rome, in opposition to the determinations of the popish council of Trent, published 1563, and the creed of Pope Pius the 4th, which added twelve

antichristian articles to the twelve primitive Christian ones, which was put out, A.D. 1564.

The 2nd vial, (ver. 3,) must therefore begin where the other ended, as to the period of time that commences from thence. Now, I find that in the year 1566, the wars between the king of Spain, and the states of the Netherlands began, when the latter got the nickname of Geuse. And though the Spaniards were often victorious at first, yet they were at length forced to declare them free states. It was then that the sea became blood to the Romanists, their votaries being miserably defeated in their expectations. For after their cruelties under the duke of Alva in the Low Countries, and their massacres of the protestants in France, and other places, the scene was changed very quickly. So that A.D. 1588, the Spaniards lost their vast Armada, and did ever after decline in their power. And the duke of Guise, the inveterate enemy of the Protestants, was killed the same year. And A.D. 1598, died Philip the 2nd of Spain, being eaten up of lice: the edict of Nantes being given out the same year in France in favour of the protestants. So that as the reformed interest was in peace everywhere, and conquered in Holland and England, the popish party, on the other hand, saw Spain, the late terror of the protestants, brought to a languishing condition, and all their allies weary of wars and persecutions. And as in the year 1609, the truce was made between the Spaniards and the Dutch, so the war, though renewed and carried on afterwards, became languid and faint, so as hardly to be felt or minded by either party, especially the Dutch, who were for the most, victorious and successful. So, that as the period of this vial began 1566, so we may reckon it continued about fifty years, viz. to the year 1617, seeing we shall find that the third vial did begin then. For,

The 3d vial, (ver. 4—7,) was poured out upon the

rivers and fountains of water, or those territories of the papacy which were as necessary to it as rivers and fountains are to a country, being as it were, the former vial continued, as to the kind of the plague. For as the former destroyed the living creatures or living souls that were in or upon the sea, viz the Spaniards, the great mariners of the world at that time, as to their marine power, who after the year 1588, lost their former sovereignty of the seas, to the English and Dutch; so this latter plague makes it difficult for the popish party to subsist and keep their ground even in the inland country and several dominions of Germany, and the neighbouring places. For in the year 1617, Ferdinand being forced upon the Bohemians by the Emperor Matthias, and crowned king, the foundation of new quarrels was laid this way. For a little while after another most bloody religious war ensued, which shook all the empire, and frightened Europe. And though the Protestants lost Bohemia, the palatinate in part, and were driven out of Moravia, Austria, and Silesia, at this time, and were not only persecuted in many places, but like to be extirpated and rooted out universally, yet the tide turned all on a sudden. For after the emperor had ruled Germany with a veteran army, for a considerable time, Gustavus Adolphus enters Germany in the year 1630, and conquers everywhere. And though he was killed about two years after, yet his army continued victorious; until at length all things were accommodated at the peace of Munster, A. D. 1648; with which therefore the period of the 3d vial must be supposed to end, which consists of thirty-one years. Now as this began with persecutions against, and cruelties upon the protestants, so at length the angel of the waters is heard to give thanks for making the papists drink of their own blood at last. Which song of praise another angel falls in with, and says Amen to. All which seems to denote the joy both of

the Protestant state and church upon the success of the Swedish arms against the emperor.

The 4th vial comes now to be considered. And as this is poured out upon the sun of the papal kingdom, (ver. 8,) so the effect of it is men's being scorched or burned with fire, which yet does not make them to turn to God, but blaspheme his name the more, as we may see, (ver. 9.) Now as this vial must begin where the other ends, viz., at, or a little after, the year 1648; so I cannot see but it must denote the wars that followed the peace of Munster, with other incidental occurrences. Now we find that the French hostilities and wars in Flanders began about this time. And though this fire seemed to be quenched by the Pyrenean peace, about ten years after that of Munster, yet this proved rather fuel to the flame, which broke out with more violence than before, by the seizure of Lorrain, the new conquests of the French in Burgundy and Flanders, and the wars upon Germany, and invasion on the Low Countries. To which we may add, the French king's quarrel with several popes, about the restitution of Castro, the rights of the duke of Modena, the affair of Corsi, and about the Regale and the Franchises. Now, seeing the bombarding of towns and cities was chiefly made use of in these later wars, we may see how properly the scorching and burning men from above (as if the sun had sent down fire and heat from his own body), is made use of to characterise the time of this vial. But the chief thing to be taken notice of here, is that the sun and other luminaries of heaven, are the emblems of princes and kingdoms, as we took notice of before. Therefore, the pouring out of this vial on the sun, must denote the humiliation of some eminent potentates of the Romish interest, whose influences and countenances cherish and support the papal cause. And these, therefore, must be principally understood of the houses of Austria and Bourbon, though not exclusively

of other Popish princes. Now, it is not unusual with God, to make his enemies crush and weaken one another. And thus, I suppose, this vial is to be understood, when it is said, that upon the pouring of it out on the sun, power was given to him (*i. e.*, the sun, as most understand the words from the connexion) to scorch men with fire. And this is plain, in what of the vial is fulfilled, and will be, perhaps, more so afterwards. As, therefore, France was made use of, in the instances given, to vex and scorch the Austrian family, in both branches of it; so, afterwards, was he himself tormented, when he saw himself forced to leave Holland, which he was so near surprising, 1672, and especially, when he was forced to resign all his conquests in Flanders, by the late peace of Reyswick. It is true, he seems now to have got more glory than ever, by the accession of his grandson to the Spanish monarchy. But then this is by an eclipse upon the Austrian family, which is expired in the first branch of it. And who knows but this advancement may lay the foundation of the ruin or decay of the French power, by exhausting that kingdom, both as to men and money, in defence of a weak monarchy? In the mean time, we see this vial has already taken place, in darkening the glory of King James (whom the Papists expected new conquests from) by the hand of King William; by whom also, God put a stop to the career of the French monarch in his conquests in Flanders, and on the Rhine. And, we see it further poured out, in the eclipse of the Austrian family, by the loss of Spain, and its dependent principalities, as also in defeating the wicked designs of the three confederate monarchs, of Poland, Denmark, and Russia.

And now, seeing I have marked out the time we are in at present, it is time also to put a stop to our apocalyptical thoughts; seeing no man can pretend, upon any just grounds, to calculate future times. However, seeing I have come so far, I shall adventure to present you

you further with some conjectural thoughts on this head; for I am far from the presumption of some men, to give them any higher character.

Now, my conjectures shall relate to two things—viz. to the remaining part of this vial, and to the other vials that follow this.

And, first, as to the remaining part of this vial, I do humbly suppose that it will come to its highest pitch about A. D. 1717, and that it will run out about the year 1794. The reasons for the first conjecture are two. The first is, because I find that the papal kingdom got a considerable accession to its power, upon the Roman western empire's being destroyed A. D. 475; to which the Heruli succeeded the year following, and the Ostro-Goths afterward. Now, if from this remarkable year we begin the calculation of the 1260 years, they lead us down to A. D. 1735, which in prophetical account is this year 1717. The second is, because (as I have many years ago observed) this year leads us down to a new centenary revolution: For is it not observable that John Huss and Jerom of Prague (to run this up no further) were burned A. D. 1417? After which the true religion in Bohemia and other places, was more and more obscured and suppressed, until that famous year 1517, when Luther arose, and gave the reformation a new resurrection: according to that remarkable prediction of Jerom of Prague, *Centum annis revolutis Deo respondetibus et mihi;* which the Bohemians afterwards stamped upon their coin as their motto. From which year the reformed interest did still increase (whatever particular stops and troubles it met with) till the year 1617; about which time the German and Bohemian wars began to break out. And it is but too obvious, what an ebb hath followed since that time to this, notwithstanding the pouring out of the second, third, and fourth vials. So that there is ground to hope, that

about the beginning of another such century, things may again alter for the better; for I cannot but hope that some new mortification of the chief supporters of Antichrist will then happen; and perhaps, the French monarchy may begin to be considerably humbled about that time; that whereas the present French king takes the sun for his emblem, and this for his motto, *nec pluribus impar*, he may, at length, or rather his successors, and the monarchy itself (at least before the year 1794), be forced to acknowledge, that (in respect to neighbouring potentates) he is even *singulis impar*.

But, as to the expiration of this vial, I do fear it will not be until the year 1794. The reason of which conjecture is this, that I find the pope got a new foundation of exaltation, when Justinian, upon his conquest of Italy, left it, in a great measure, to the pope's management, being willing to eclipse his own authority, to advance that of this haughty prelate. Now, this being in the year 552, this, by the addition of the 1260 years, reaches down to the year 1811; which, according to prophetical account, is the year 1794. And then, I do suppose, the fourth vial will end, and the fifth commence by a new mortification of the papacy, after this vial has lasted 148 years, which, indeed, is long, in comparison with the former vials; but, if it be considered in relation to the fourth, fifth, and sixth trumpets, it is but short, seeing the fourth lasted 190 years, the fifth 302, and the sixth 393.

And now, my friends, I may be well excused, if I venture no further, in giving you any more conjectural thoughts upon this present period of time. But, seeing I pretend to give my speculations, of what is future, no higher character than guesses, I shall still venture to add something to what I have already said.—Therefore be pleased, first, to call to mind what I premised to the consideration of the seven vials, as the second pre-

liminary—viz. that seeing the vials do (all of them) suppose a struggle or war between the popish and reformed parties, every vial is to be looked upon as the event and conclusion of some new periodical attack of that first party upon this other; the issue of which, proves, at length, favourable to the latter against the former. For, if this be duly considered, it will let us see, that great declining of the protestant interest, for some time, and great and formidable advances, and new degrees of increase in the Romish party, are very consistent with the state of both these opposite interests, under the vials. For, as Rome pagan was gradually ruined under the seals, under many of which it seemed to increase to outward observation, and to become more rampant than before, when yet it was indeed declining; so must we suppose it will be with Rome papal. For monarchies, as they rise gradually and insensibly, so do they wear out likewise. And, therefore, we must not entertain such chimerical notions of the fall of the papacy, as if it were to be accomplished speedily, or miraculously, as many have done. For, as it rose insensibly, and step by step-so it must fall in like manner. But to illustrate this, further, as to what of the vials is yet unfulfilled, by what is past; let us look back on the two preceding vials. The second vial, therefore, began with a formidable attack upon the protestants, by the growth of the Austrian family, from the year 1566, to the year 1588; during all which time, the vial seemed rather to be poured out on the protestants than papists. But, as there must be a war, to denote a victory; so it was in this case. So that the vial was seen at last, in its effects, upon the Austrian party, from 1588 to 1598; and, afterwards, to 1617. For it is with the church, as it is with particular Christians, who are often sorely buffeted by Satan, and sometimes brought even to extremities by temptations; but do ever carry the victory at last. Who

would have believed that the Christian church was about to triumph over the Roman pagan empire, when the dreadful persecution under Dioclesian, and his collegiate emperors, was at its highest pitch? But the darkest time of the night, ushers in the dawning of the church's day, in the usual way of God's providence over the same. And this is very conspicuously to be observed, in the period of the third vial. Who would have thought that the loss of Bohemia, and the emperor Ferdinand's ruling all Germany with a formidable army, were like to issue in the victories of the Swedish arms, and the future security of the protestant interest through the empire and elsewhere? So that we must not wonder if for sixteen years, the house of Bourbon be raised up to be a further terror and scourge to the world, and to protestant nations particularly. And, as a confirmation of this conjecture, let it be considered, in the second place (besides what I hinted before on this head), that it is something very extraordinary, and peculiar, in some sense, to this vial, that the sun, upon which it is poured out, should yet be made the executor of the judgment of it on others, at the same time that he is tormented with it himself. So that whosoever is denoted by the sun here (as I suppose the house of Bourbon principally is), is made use of, as the devil is, both to torment others, and to be tormented himself in so doing. And, if the king of France, therefore, be denoted by this principally, I fear he is yet to be made use of, in the hand of God, as Nebuchadnezzar was, of old, against the Jews—viz. as a further severe scourge to the Protestant churches everywhere. And, besides this characteristical mark, which seems to forebode his further exultation and our humiliation; there is yet a third thing, that I cannot but think upon with dread and trembling of heart—viz. that it is further said, That while this sun of the popish world is running his fatal and dreadful career, and scorching men with fire, they

are so far from being bettered by these judgments, that they go on more and more to blaspheme the name of God, who has power over these plagues. And while this continues to be the state of the Protestant world, and, while atheism, deism, Socinianism, irreligion, profaneness, scepticism, formality, hatred of godliness, and a bitter persecuting spirit, continue and increase among us; what can we expect but new and desolating judgments? For, while we continue to walk thus contrary to God, we cannot but expect that he should walk contrary to us also. It is vain for us to boast of our privileges, or plead exemption from judgments on this account. For, where there is no national reformation and repentance, national sins are like to pull down miseries upon us, so much the sooner and more certainly, that we have been so singularly and peculiarly privileged. For we may in this case expect that God will say to us, as to the Israelites of old, "You have I specially known and chosen above all the families or nations of the earth, therefore will I punish you more certainly and more severely than any other kingdom or nation." (Amos iii. 2.) And, therefore, if we go on in sin, as we have hitherto done, let us take heed to ourselves, lest vengeance be near. I pray God I may be mistaken in my fears. But I am afraid I have but too just reason to turn prophet here, by applying to ourselves, what Peter said to those of his time: "The time is come, that judgment must begin at the house of God." (1 Pet. iv. 17.) Though I do also conclude with him, that if it begin at us, dreadful will be the end of our enemies at last. And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly appear? Wherefore, if we be called to suffer for our holy religion, let us do so according to the will of God, committing the keeping of our souls to him in well-doing, as to a faithful Creator. And I wish my conjecture be not found to be more than a mere guess, that for about six-

teen years our Romish enemies may prevail more and more. Though how far these may be lengthened out or shortened, we can only conjecturally judge of, from the future carriage of the reformed churches, under the circumstances that may be stated afterwards. If any say, that these are melancholy conjectures: I must tell them I cannot help the matter; for I must follow the thread of the text, and the aspect of the times. If they ask, but when will the tide turn for the Protestant church? I answer, when they turn more universally to God, and no sooner. But if they enquire further, whether the sun of the popish kingdom is not to be eclipsed himself at length? I must positively assert he will; else this vial were not a judgment upon him and the Romish party. But if yet the question be, when this is to fall out, and how? I must tell you, that I have nothing further to add to what I have said, as to the time. But as to the manner, how this is to be done, our text does lay a foundation of some more distinct thoughts. Therefore, in the fourth and last place, we may justly suppose, that the French monarchy, after it has scorched others, will itself consume by doing so; its fire, and that which is the fuel that maintains it, wasting insensibly, till it be exhausted at last towards the end of this century, as the Spanish monarchy did before, towards the end of the the sixteenth age. And if we do now heartily and unanimously enter upon a war against France, with the assistance of allies, and be but vigorous and faithful in the prosecution of it, securing the source of money and treasure in the heart of America, and bringing the war into the bowels of a nation, where a young monarch is hardly established; I say, if we do this, without losing our opportunities, our peace and security may yet be lengthened out. Whereas, if we suffer ourselves to be lulled asleep at this time, we may have cause to lament our not having improved our season. But seeing I am

not called to give my advice one way or other, I shall leave the determination of such weighty matters to the wisdom of national councils. However, as my duty is to pray for direction unto these; so I earnestly wish, that there may be nothing to stop the regular and secure procedure of public matters at this critical juncture; upon the wise improvement of which our future stability and peace does so much depend. And now, after all this, I desire ye may consult a book I formerly published, called, "The Rod, or the Sword; or the present Dilemma of these Nations." For ye will there see, more fully, my thoughts of our times, and how the moral reasons given there, taken from the aspect of our age, though preached in 1692, and published the year following, do exactly agree with my present apocalytical thoughts.

One thing only I shall further take notice of here, upon the occasion of the king of Spain's death, that God seems to mark out great things sometimes by very minute ones, such as names, *e. g.* as the Spanish monarchy begun with Charles the Fifth (as to the Austrian family), so it has now expired in one of the same name: which I the rather observe, because of many instances of the same kind. Of which number take these following: Darius the Mede, as Daniel calls him (though Xenophon call him Cyaxares), the uncle of Cyrus, was the first Medo-Persian monarch, after the destruction of the Babylonian; and Darius Codomanus was the last. Ptolemeus Lagi began the Egyptian kingdom after Alexander's death, and Ptolemeus Dionysius was the last of that race. Augustus fixed the Roman empire, and it ended in Augustulus. The Eastern Roman empire was erected by Constantine the Great, and expired with Constantine Paleologus. The Scots race came into England in a James, and has gone out again in another of that name. And whether William, the third king of England of that name, as well as the third William,

prince of Orange, be likely to be the last both these ways, is left to future time to unriddle. Only I pray, that God may long preserve him, and us by him: and may he live to be a further scourge to France, and a terror to Romanists.

But, secondly, to proceed with my other conjectures, relating to the remaining vials, I do further suppose, that

The fifth vial, (ver. 10, 11,) which is to be poured out on the seat of the beast, or the dominions that more immediately belong to, and depend upon the Roman See; that, I say, this judgment will probably begin about the year 1794, and expire about 1848. So that the duration of it, upon this supposition, will be for the space of fifty-four years. For, I do suppose, that seeing the pope received the title of supreme bishop no sooner than 606, he cannot be supposed to have any vial poured upon his seat immediately (so as to ruin his authority so signally as this judgment must be supposed to do), until the year 1848, which is the date of the 1260 years, in prophetical account, when they are reckoned from 606. But yet we are not to imagine, that this vial will totally destroy the papacy (though it will exceedingly weaken it); for we find this still in being, and alive, when the next vial is poured out.

The sixth vial, (ver. 12, &c.) will be poured out upon the Mahometan Antichrist, as the former on the papacy. And seeing the sixth trumpet brought the Turks from beyond the Euphrates, from crossing which river, they date their rise, this sixth vial dries up their waves, and exhausts their power, as the means and way to prepare and dispose the Eastern kings and kingdoms to renounce their Heathenish and Mahometan errors, in order to their receiving and embracing Christianity. For I think this is the native import of the text, and not that the Jews are to be understood under this denomination of the kings

of the East, which is such an odd straining of it, to serve a turn, as I cannot admit of. Now, seeing this vial is to destroy the Turks, we hear of three unclean spirits like frogs or toads, that were sent out by Satan, and the remains of the polity and church of Rome, called the beast and the false prophet, in order in insinuate upon the Eastern nations, upon their deserting Mahometism, to fall in with their idolatrous and spurious Christianity, rather than with the true reformed doctrine. And these messengers shall be so successful, as to draw these Eastern kings and their subjects, and, with them, the greatest part of mankind, to take part with them. So that, by the assistance of these, their agents and missionaries, they shall engage the whole world, in some manner, to join with them in rooting out the saints. (And here, in a parenthesis, Christ gives a watch-word to his servants, to be upon their guard in this hour of trial, ver. 15.) But, when the pope has got himself at the head of this vast army, and has brought them to the place of battle, called Armageddon (*i. e.*, the place where there will be a most diabolical, cunning, and powerful conspiracy against Christ's followers); then, immediately, doth the seventh angel pour out his vial, to their ruin and destruction.

The seventh vial, therefore, being poured out on the air, (ver. 17,) brings down thunder, lightning, hail, and storms; which, together with a terrible earthquake, destroys all the Antichristian nations, and particularly Rome, or mystical Babylon. And as Christ concluded his sufferings on the cross with this voice, "It is finished," so the church's sufferings are concluded with a voice out of the temple of heaven, and from the throne of God and Christ there, saying, "It is done." And, therefore, with this doth the blessed millenium of Christ's spiritual reign on earth begin, of which, and what may be supposed to follow, we took some notice above.

Now, seeing these two vials are, as it were, one con-

tinued, the first running into the second, and the second completing the first; the one giving us an account of the beast's preparations for warring against the saints, and the other showing the event of the whole. There is no need to give you any conjectures about the conclusion of the sixth vial, or the beginning of the last; only you may observe, that the first of these will probably take up most of the time between the year 1848, and the year 2000, because such long messages and intrigues (besides the time spent before, in destroying the Turkish empire), and preparations for so universal a war, must needs take up a great many years, whereas, our blessed Lord seems to tell us, that the destruction of all those his enemies, will be accomplished speedily, and in a little time, in comparison of the other vial. Supposing, then, that the Turkish monarchy should be totally destroyed between 1848 and 1900, we may justly assign seventy or eighty years longer to the end of the sixth seal, and but twenty or thirty, at most, to the last. Now, how great and remarkable this last destruction of the papal Antichrist will be, we may guess by that representation of it, (chap. xiv. 19, 20,) where it is set forth under the emblem and character of the great wine-press of the wrath of God (which can refer to nothing properly but the event of the seventh vial, as I might show at large, had I time). Now, this wine-press is said to be trodden without the city (viz., of Jerusalem, or the church, seeing this is called the City, in scripture style, as Rome is called the Great City) in Armageddon (Rev. xvi. 16), which may bear allusion to the valley of Decision (Joel iii. 2, 12, 14). However, the greatness of this slaughter appears in this, that the blood is represented to flow in such a current as to reach even to the horse-bridles, viz., of the servants of God, employed in this execution; for, without doubt, this relates to what we have in chap. xix. 14, which I beseech you to compare with this place. For ye will find that a

large account is given of the fall of Babylon, (chap. xviii.) and of the triumph of the church, upon her final victory over this enemy, (chap. xix. 1, &c.) And, among other things spoken of, relating to the battle and victory obtained at Armageddon, ye have this account of the General and his victorious army (ver. 11, &c.)—"And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat on him was called Faithful and True . . . and he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called the Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses. . . And he treaded the wine-press of the fierceness and wrath of God . . . And I saw the beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together, to fight against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. And the beast and the false prophet were taken, and both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh." And now, to return to the representation of this slaughter, by the wine-press of blood (chap. xiv. 20); it is further said of it, that it flowed to the height of the horse-bridles, for the space or extent of 1600 furlongs. So that Armageddon seems to be denoted here, in the extent of it, as the field of battle, which is now turned into a field of blood. Now, what place can we imagine to be so properly meant by this, as the territory of the See of Rome in Italy, which (as Mr. Joseph Mede, who first made this observation, says), from the city of Rome to the furthermost mouth of the River Po, and the marshes of Verona, is extended the space of 200 Italian miles, that is exactly 1600 furlongs: the Italian mile consisting of eight furlongs. Now the Hebrew word Armageddon or Harmageddon may be justly derived from חרמה, which signifies both a malediction or anathema, and a destruction

or slaughter, and גדון, or more fully גדחון, which signifies an army, or *their* army. So that both the anathemas darted against the saints by the Romanists, and their armies made use of against them (all which proceeded from Rome papal), may be here alluded to, in the expiration of both their ecclesiastical and temporal interest. So that this conjecture upon the name does confirm that other of Mr. Mede, that the Stata Della Chiefa, or the territory and possession of Italy belonging to the See of Rome, is the place called Armageddon, where the final destruction of antichristianism will be.

And now, my friends, I have fulfilled my promise to you, in giving you, not only a resolution of the grand apocalyptical question, When the papacy began, and when we may suppose it will end, but some considerable improvement of it, with respect to the knowledge not only of times past, but that particular period we are now under, together with conjectures (and some of them, I am sure, new and uncommon) about future time. By all which, I hope, I have given the world such a key to unlock all the chambers of the Book of the Revelation, as I hope I may venture to say (if considered and used impartially, judiciously, and diligently), will be found to give some new light to us, in our mental journey through the mazes, and turnings, and dark passages therefore. And had I not been so confined, as ye may see I have been, I might have cleared a great many other dark things in this prophecy. But, seeing I could not neglect this opportunity of presenting these thoughts to the world, as a new year and new age's gift at once, I do, therefore, hope ye will the more easily excuse what may seem dark or defective in this discourse, as considering how much I am straitened, not only as to the limits of paper that I must keep to, but of time also.

Now, seeing I have already given you a theoretical improvement of the question I have presented you with

a resolution of, all that remains is to bring you from speculations and notions to practice; that your thoughts may be so seasoned with a serious and deep sense of your duty and interest, that ye may get advantage both by the perusal of my preceding apocalyptical meditations, and the following discourses. That after ye have considered the duty of improving your time (which, together with some other things I am now to treat of,) ye may make application to yourselves of what I have said concerning God's dwelling with men upon the earth, so as ye yourselves may become temples of the living God, seeing God hath promised this privilege to all true Christians, saying, "I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." (2 Cor. vi. 16.) And when ye have thus applied to yourselves the first of the following discourses, I hope ye will not reckon it lost time, to consider what I have said as to the ministerial work, especially the application, as to that part of it, at least, which does immediately relate to you and all Christians, as well as ministers; that this way ye may learn to join in with Christ's ordinances for the future, with greater seriousness, and in order to further good than perhaps any of us have yet attained to do. And when ye have improved this way, also by the perusal of the second discourse, let me desire you to read the last concluding one, with serious meditation, in order to see the connexion and design of the whole. For, though it be short, yet it contains much in little, and may be of use to introduce your minds to some further and more distinct apprehension of our holy religion, as it centres in Jesus Christ. And when ye have thus perused and considered both this and the following discourses, I am willing ye think as meanly of both me and them as ye please, upon condition, that ye may this way value the holy Scriptures more. For, as my design, in all my performances of this kind, is to dig my materials from

the fruitful and rich mines of this divine depositum and sacred treasure; so I have no other end than to lead you in there also, that ye may be more and more enriched with the saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. In order to this, therefore,

Let me, in the second place, suggest something here by way of a practical improvement of what I have said above, especially that part of our discourse which I was last upon, relating to the apocalyptical times and periods, with the transactions of the same, in as far as they concern us. And what I have to say here I shall propose by way of observations, which may be of some use, I hope, both to regulate our thoughts and actions, while we live in the world, in relation to the concerns of the church of God.

The first observation is, that it may justly be looked upon as an eminent confirmation of the truth of Christianity, that so wonderful an account should be given of the transactions of the world, so long before they came to pass.

The verity of our holy religion is proved from two things principally—viz. miracles and prophesy; and both these arguments have been excellently improved by learned men. But yet, as the first of these was perhaps the principal and most convincing topic to those that lived in our Saviour's days; so I look upon the second to be the most considerable to those that live in after ages. Nay, we find that Christ himself did not lay the foundation of the belief of his mission on miracles alone, but seemed to build the faith of his disciples chiefly on the Old Testament prophecies, as he did to the two disciples going to Emmaus (Luke xxiv. 27), &c.; and I suppose, it is too plain to need any proof, that the apostles did ever insist upon the prophecies of the Old Testament, more than either upon Christ's miracles or their own, in order thence to demonstrate that Christ was the Messias.

"For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," (Rev. xix. 10,) *i. e.* (as I understand the words) the spirit of prophecy is the great standing evidence and testimony of the divinity of Christ, and of the verity of his word; and therefore (as the angel argues with John) he only is to be worshipped who is truly God, and who inspires his servants with the gift of knowing things to come.

It has therefore been the work of learned men in all ages, to prove that Christ was the true Messias, and consequently that his institution of religion was truly divine, by shewing how punctually the Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled in him. But I am much mistaken, if an impartial considerer of the New Testament prophecies may not find some things that do almost as plainly characterize several later events, as the ancient prophecies did the former; and of this, let what I have said of the sixth and seventh seal, and fifth and sixth trumpet, and of the slaughter of the witnesses, be taken as instances; or if this will not be allowed, let it be considered, that we see the full completion of the Old Testament prophecies relating to the erection of Christianity, whereas we see not the entire fulfilling of the apocalyptical ones. Therefore we must make allowance for the different representation of the one and the other of these. For they only that shall live after the great battle of Armageddon is over, can see the exact fulfilling of this prophecy in the destruction of Antichrist, with the same advantage they see also the fulfilling of Daniel's visions, with respect to the coming of the Messiah and his death. We therefore now have no more advantage, as to time, in explaining and understanding this latter event, than the Jews had as to the first, who lived in the days of the Maccabees, while Daniel's weeks of years were running out; and I question if they then did understand the periods of time they were under, more clearly, if at all so distinctly, as we do the times that have past

over the Christian church, and that part of time we are now under. Therefore, I say, we have great reason to thank God, that so much of this book is already made so clear to us, as to prove confirming thus far to our faith. For what differences have been among the most eminent interpreters of this book, as to particular calculations and accommodations of things; yet they have all of them agreed in the main foundations of the interpretation thereof, which I have built upon (excepting Grotius and Hammond, whose hypothesis has had few followers, and will have fewer), as Dr. Cressener has irrefragably proved in his book, entitled, "A demonstration of the first principles of the Protestant applications of the Apocalypse." So that there are two things almost equally strange to me, that the Jews should own the verity of the Old Testament and particularly of Daniel's prophecy, and not see that the Messias is come; and that the papists should believe the divinity of the New Testament, and particularly of the Revelation, and not see that their church is antichristian. But while I admire the wilful stupidity of both these parties; I cannot but admire also the wisdom of God in making use of both these in his Providence to confirm to us the verity of Christianity, in prophesying both of the one and the other so long before, and in continuing them to this day as standing monuments of the divinity both of the Old and New Testament. But besides, there is

A second observation, that may be of great use to us this way also—viz. that this book represents to us, as in a small but exact map, the steadiness and exactness of Providence, and Christ's government of the world.

For here we see various and seemingly confused events of Providence so exactly methodized, as to make up one uniform and noble piece. The seeming discords and jarring sound of things, being so disposed by infinite wisdom, as to make up one perfect harmony. Here

piety and wickedness, angels and devils, the church and Antichrist, act various and contrary parts; and yet Christ makes use of all for noble purposes, and carries all on for one great end.

And now, as in other respects so in this, we may take notice of the perfection of the Holy Scripture; that what is wanting in history is made up in prophecy, which, in some sense, is history also. For if history, in the general notion of it, be an account or relation of the actions of men in the world, prophecy is no less a species of this than that to which the name is most commonly appropriated. For, as that is a relation of things past, prophecy is an account of things to come. Now, as Daniel makes up the hiatus or defect of the history of the Old Testament, so the Revelation of John supplies that of the New, by leading us down from Christ's first to his second coming.

And here let me observe, that these two books give us the exact plan of a Divine history, which never yet was given; the only essay towards something of this kind that I know of, having been given by a near and dear * friend of mine. For though there have been many ecclesiastical as well as civil histories written, yet none of these run in the strain of Scripture history, where all matters of fact are related, not so much in a reference to men as, in relation to God, and his providence, in governing the world.

A third observation is this, that we may now, after what I have said, attain to a distinct view of what part of this prophecy is past, and what remains yet to be fulfilled.

Of this I shall say nothing directly at this time, seeing the preceding scheme I have given of the apoca-

* My father, in his third part of the fulfilling of Scripture, called "Scripture Truth confirmed and cleared, by some eminent appearances of God for his church, under the New Testament."

lyptical periods may, I humbly hope, afford you a sufficient thread to regulate and fix your thoughts and meditations in relation to this subject. Only I shall hint some things to you, that are deducible from what I have already said this way.

Therefore, first, let me advise you not to suffer yourselves to be deluded with the specious or confident pretences of some men; when they go about to impose, not only upon themselves but upon the world, by their notions relating to the sudden coming of Christ to judge the world, or to the speedy destruction of the papacy. I love to expose no man's weaknesses, and I perfectly abhor the way that of late is become modish, to rip up and publish personal failings. And, therefore, I shall neither trample upon the graves of the dead, nor affront the living: as remembering that we do all know in part and prophecy in part only. But, without detracting from others, I do in faithfulness and love desire ye may not suffer yourselves to be imposed upon by a vain imagination that the end of things is so near, as some both of old and of late have pretended to foresee. For, from the scheme I have given you, ye may easily see, that there are many and great events to fall out, before the final fall of antichristianism, and more before the consummation of all things.

And, secondly, as I would not have you to suffer your hope to carry you too far, so neither your fear. For, as the warm imagination of some men has represented to them the fall of Antichrist and the day of judgment so near, that these must happen in their times; so the melancholy and fear of others has so far wrought upon them, that they have fancied the great slaughter of the witnesses is yet to come. And of both these sorts of men, this observation will be found generally to be true; that those over whose reason, fancy and imagination has the ascendant (whether it be an airy or sprightly, or a dull

and melancholy one), have still limited great events to their own time, and most commonly to a very few years. But I am much mistaken if I have not proved, that the universal slaughter of the witnesses is already past; though, at the same time, I do readily grant that there is just ground to fear, that we are near some very trying judgments, of some years' continuance. But I have said enough of this above, and therefore shall add no more here.

But, thirdly, seeing I have touched but slightly upon the millennium, or the thousand years' reign of the saints on earth; I shall desire you to think a little further on this, as the greatest event that is to happen before the end of the world.

I dare not, indeed, expatiate upon this vast subject; only I shall suggest a few things concerning it. The first is, that this is to begin immediately after the total and final destruction of Rome papal, in or about the year 2000; and that, therefore, Christ himself will have the honour of destroying that formidable enemy, by a new and remarkable appearance of himself, as I said above. But, secondly, we must not imagine that this appearance of Christ will be a personal one, no more than his appearance in the destruction of the Jews by Vespasian and Titus was such; for, "the heavens must retain him, until the great and last day of the consummation or restitution of all things." (Acts iii. 21.) Thirdly, yet we must have a care of confounding this millenary peaceful state of the church, with the day of judgment; seeing nothing is more plainly distinguished, than these are in the 20th chapter of the Revelation; where it is told us, That after the thousand years are expired, Satan shall again be let loose, and men shall apostatize almost universally from Christ, and make war against the saints; and that after the destruction of those enemies, the day of judgment shall commence. And, therefore, fourthly,

we are not to imagine that the millenary reign of the saints shall be free from all mixture of hypocrisy and wicked men, or from sin and trouble; seeing the sudden and general apostacy that follows that period is a demonstration, that all were not Israel that feigned themselves to be of it, and wanted therefore only an opportunity to shake off the church's yoke. Nay, the expiration of that period shews, that long peace and prosperity must have corrupted the church itself; else it cannot be conceived to be consistent with the equity and goodness of God, to suffer her enemies to go so near to the total extirpation of his own professing people.

These things I have hinted thus, because I have no time or room to insist upon them as the subject does require. But I do the more readily pass them now, because a * late learned author has materially considered them, at least the three last of them; wherein he has very much confirmed my apocalyptical thoughts, which several years ago I had entertained upon this head.

And the same † author has prevented my enquiry concerning the call of the Jews, and their national conversion to Christianity; for, as I took notice before, I could never fall in with the strained interpretation of Rev. xvi. 12, as if by the kings of the east, the Jews were to be understood, and that, consequently, their full conversion was to be under the sixth vial. Therefore, after various thoughts upon this head, being satisfied that the Jews were to be converted, and that this great event could not be wholly left out in the Revelation, I did at last conclude, that this must not be (whatever particular conversions of some part of them might happen) until the final destruction of the popish party; whose idolatry, villanies,

* Dr. Whitby's Treatise of the Millennium, added to his Paraphrase and Comment on the Epistles.

† The same author, ibid. and on the 11th of the Romans, and in the Appendix to the same.

lies and legends, and bloody temper, is the chief thing that prejudices them against Christianity. So that I did at length conclude, that the resurrection or revival of the ancient Jewish church, is understood by the resurrection of the martyrs, (chap. xx. 4,) who being thus added to the true reformed Christian church, and making up one body, together with those Gentile believers, in the fulness or ripened state of the Gentile church, shall be to them as life from them the dead. (See Rom. xi. 15—25.)

One notion only I crave leave to add to those of the above-cited author on these heads—viz. that I look upon the millenary state to be the most eminent and illustrious time of the Christocraty (I hope none will reject the word, though it be new, seeing it is so expressive of the thing), wherein Christ will revive, but in a more spiritual and excellent way, the ancient Theocraty of the Jews. For, as under Moses, the judges and kings of Judah, God acted as king of the Jews (or Christ rather, in a more peculiar and immediate sense, as I may, perhaps, have an occasion, afterwards, to prove to the world); so I do expect, that after God has delivered his Christian church from spiritual Egypt, and destroyed his enemies in the Red Sea of their own blood, he will once more exert his power and authority, and our blessed Redeemer will reign as king of his people, not indeed in such a pompous way as among the Jews of old (for John saw no temple in the New Jerusalem, Rev. xxi. 22), but in a way adapted to the New Testament dispensation, and more immediately preparative unto, and typical of the state of glory in heaven, after the day of judgment is over.

And now that I am upon this great prophetical event, I cannot forbear to give you a new conjecture upon the last numbers of Daniel. For his seventy weeks of years, (chap. ix. 24,) are already remarkably elapsed in the in the incarnation and death of our Redeemer. And the

number of 2000 days, (chap. viii.) are plainly to be interpreted of the time of Antiochus Epiphanes, his profanation of the sanctuary; for, as it is restricted to that short period, as is plain to any that will attentively consider the words themselves, (ver. 9—14, especially if compared with ver. 21—26,) so the Spirit of God, by designing this period by the title *evenings-mornings*, *i. e.* natural days, does plainly assure us that we are not to interpret these days prophetically for years, as we are allowed to do the seventy weeks, and other numbers. To return, therefore, to the last numbers of Daniel; there are two distinct periods of time, as I take them to be (though all other interpreters go another way), to be found in his 12th chapter. The first is of a time, times, and a half, or three years and a half, (ver. 7,) *i. e.* 1290 prophetical days, or years, as Daniel himself has it explained to him. (ver. 11.) This, therefore, is the same period of time that John borrows from Daniel, and accommodates to the duration of Rome papal; excepting that there is the difference of thirty days, or years: only that era of this period in Daniel, is vastly different from that of John; for, as to the latter, we have seen it already; but as to the former, Daniel fixes it at the scattering of the holy people, or the Jewish nation, (ver. 7,) and at the taking away the daily sacrifice, and the setting up of the abomination that maketh desolate. (ver. 11.) Now, our Saviour, who was certainly the best expositor of his own word, explains this abomination that maketh desolate, and which was to pollute and ruin the sanctuary, to be nothing else but the idolatrous and desolating Roman army; as we see by comparing Matthew xxiv. 15, with Luke xxi. 20, 21. The epocha, therefore, of the time, times, and a half, in Daniel, or his 1290 years, must be the year 70 from the birth of our Saviour, when Jerusalem was taken, if we should consider the beginning of the setting up the abomination that maketh desolate.

But seeing the era of this number is not the beginning of the conquest of the Jews, but the complete scattering of that nation, or "the accomplishing the scattering of the power of the holy people," as the words are (ver. 7), and the full setting up of the abomination that maketh desolate, (ver. 11,) which was not done till Hadrian's time; who fully conquered the Jews, and built a city near the ruins of Jerusalem, which he called Ælia, building, at the same time, a temple to Jupiter, on the ground where the temple had stood, and engraving over the gate of this new city the figure of a swine, in derision of the Jews. Now, this work was finished in or about the year 135. From whence the period of 1290 years leads us down to A.D. 1425, which, in prophetical reckoning, is the year 1407. About which time, the papal power was at its utmost elevation; for, after this time, the Hussites, Albigenses, Wickliffites, Waldenses, Picards, &c. began to fall before the Romanists, until they were, in a manner, totally extirpated before another century had well nigh run out. Now this dismal period expires about this time; and then, there follows the second period of 1335 days or years, (ver. 12,) which being calculated from the year 1407, terminates A. D. 2724, *i. e.* 2722 of prophetical reckoning: which, therefore, includes the begun downfal of the papacy under the seven vials; and the final accomplishment thereof afterwards, together with the greatest part of the millennium; and, consequently, the great conversion of the Jewish nation during that period. And, perhaps, the begun apostacy of Jewish and Gentile Christians (which is to issue in an universal war against the saints, upon the expiration of the millennium), may begin about that year 2722.

And, now that I have come again upon prophetical numbers, I shall venture to digress a little more still, in giving you some further illustration of these two great periods, from the 14th chapter of the Revelations.

Of which take these few hints at this time. In the first place, then, ye have a description of Christ's followers adhering to him, during the reign and rage of Antichrist, (ver. 1—5, inclusive): which must therefore, reach down from A.D. 606, or 758 rather, to 1517. After which, we have the begun revival of the church of Christ, represented, in the second place, by the testimonies of the three angels, succeeding one another. The first angel has a commission to preach the gospel purely to all nations (ver. 6, 7), which must therefore begin with the preaching of Zuinglius and Luther; and does include, I humbly suppose, the periods of the four first vials. The second angel follows, (ver. 8,) and proclaims the fall of Babylon, or the papacy; and must therefore be synchronical with the fifth vial, being poured out upon the seat of the beast. The third angel gives men warning, that they should not join with the beast, and denounceth severe judgments against them that shall be found to do so. (ver. 10, &c.) Which, therefore, relates to the last part of the time of the sixth vial, when the unclean spirits go forth to insinuate into the nations, in order to engage them to make war against the saints, (chap. xvi. 13—16.) Now, after all these things, we have in the third place, a typical or emblematical account of the deliverance of the church, and of the destruction of the bloody, persecuting, antichristian party. Therefore, we have first, the emblem of an harvest, which seems immediately to relate to Christ's gathering his church into a happy state, (ver. 14—16.) And then, secondly, we have the representation of the final destruction of the popish party, under the emblem of a vintage; wherein the bloody clusters of the several popish fraternities and communities are to be bruised and squeezed to death in the wine-press of God's wrath, (ver. 17—20.) But I have spoken already to this great period of time above, which issues in the blessed millennium, and therefore I shall say no more to it at this time.

Only there is one thing which falls in my way here, which ought not to be passed over in silence, and that is, to what period we are to refer the happy state of the new Jerusalem, (chap. xxi.) and of the blessed river and tree of life, (chap. xxii.) For I find interpreters at a mighty loss this way, whether these relate to the millennium or heaven itself, after the day of judgment is past. And, indeed, there are some things that seem inconsistent with either of these states. For what is said of the nations flocking into this new state, and walking in the light of it; and of the kings of the earth, that they shall bring in their glory and honour to the church, (chap. xxi. 24—26,) seems not to agree with the notion the Scripture gives us of the state of the glorified in the higher heaven, after the resurrection, but does exactly suit with the peaceful reign of the saints, when Jerusalem, or the church, shall be exalted above the nations, who shall all run into her. And yet, upon the other hand, there are things also that seem to be too great even for the blessed millennium, as we have given the notion of it above. Such is the account of the perfection of this state, that it will be exempted from all death, sorrow, crying, and pain, (chap. xxi. 4.) And yet, as the former expressions may be adapted to the state of the church triumphant in heaven, in a spiritual sense, so these last expressions may be made to suit also with the state of the church on earth, during the millennium, in a comparative sense, *i. e.* if considered with respect to the preceding afflicted condition of Christians.

Therefore, seeing this last glorious scene of affairs may be interpreted in relation either to the one or other of these periods, I conclude that we ought to interpret it of both, viz., of the millennium, in a first sense, and of the future glory of the church in heaven, in a second and complete sense. For as I observed above, that the sacred prophecies, particularly that in the 24th chapter of Matthew, and 2d chapter of the 2d epistle to the Thessalo-

nians, are to be interpreted both in a first, and second or ultimate sense; so do I believe we must of necessity understand the account of the new heavens and new earth, and of the heavenly Jerusalem, in this book. And if this be once supposed, then it will be easy to adjust the seemingly different figures used by the Holy Spirit in this place, seeing the whole is so contrived, that it may correspond both with the millenary state and the future state of glory, viz., to the first, as an emblem and type of the latter. So that as the destruction of the Jewish nation and church, is given in such words (Matth. xxiv.) as to become this way an emblem of the final destruction of the world, so likewise, is the millennium so painted and described (Rev. xxi.) as to be designedly given as a type of the state of the church-triumphant in heaven, after the day of judgment is over.

A fourth observation from what I said before, is this, that our reformers did not rashly, but upon just grounds, desert the church of Rome as antichristian and apostatical.

For, not to insist upon prophetical indications of the Roman church being indeed the great Antichrist, there are four things that lay a just foundation for all honest men's leaving that interest—viz., 1. Gross errors, such as purgatory, human merits, and works of supererogation, indulgences, transubstantiation, &c. 2. Horrid idolatry, in worshipping angels, saints, and canonized persons, together with images, statues, crucifixes, and a consecrated wafer. 3. The pretended infallibility of the Roman see, in imposing upon men's consciences what they please, and debarring us from reading the Scriptures ourselves, or making use of our own reason in the matters of religion. And 4. The dreadful tyranny of that party, seen and felt both in their inhuman cruelties, persecutions, massacres, and diabolical barbarities, used against all those that differ from them. For the proof of all which

things, let Chamierus be consulted, together with "Heydegerus de Babylone magna, Turretinus de necessaria Secessione ab Ecclesia Romana," and besides innumerable others, Stillingfleet's late pieces against the Romanists. For my time allows me not now to enlarge upon any of these heads.

Only, that I may not leave you without some specimen of popery, I shall copy out in English the twelve articles of the Romish faith, additional to the twelve Christian ones, which are contained in the Apostle's Creed, as to the sum and substance of them. These twelve additional articles are contained in the famous bull of Pope Pius the IVth, dated at Rome in the year 1564, in the ides of November, and the fifth year of his pontificate, which is to be found at the end of the printed canons and decrees of the council of Trent; where, after an enumeration of the primitive articles, beginning with *Credo in unum Deum, &c.* "I believe in one God, &c." he proceeds to charge all men that would be saved, to own and swear unto the following articles also; anathematizing all that do not so. These begin thus—*Apostolicas et ecclesiasticas traditiones, &c.*, which take in English thus:

"1. I do also (*i. e.* together with the articles of the Apostle's Creed) most firmly admit and embrace the apostolical and ecclesiastical traditions, and all other observations and constitutions of the same (*i. e.* the Roman) Church.

"2. I do admit the sacred Scriptures in the same sense that holy Mother Church doth, whose business it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of them; which I will receive and interpret according to the unanimous consent of the fathers.

"3. I do profess and believe, that there are seven Sacraments of the new law, truly and properly so called, instituted by Jesus Christ our Lord, and necessary to the

salvation of mankind, though not all of them to every person. These are, baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, extreme unction, orders, and marriage, which do all of them confer grace. And I do believe, that of these, baptism, confirmation, and orders, may not be repeated without sacrilege. I do also receive and admit the received and approved rites of the catholic (*i. e.* Roman) church, in her solemn administration of the above said sacraments.

"4. I do receive all and every thing that hath been defined and declared by the holy council of Trent, concerning Original Sin and Justification.

"5. I do profess, that in the Mass there is offered to God a true, proper, and propitiatory sacrifice for the quick and the dead. And that, in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist, there is truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and Divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ; and that there is a conversion made of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood; which conversion the catholic church calls transubstantiation.

"6. I confess, that under one kind only, whole and entire Christ, and a true sacrament, is taken and received.

"7. I do firmly believe that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls kept prisoners there, do receive help by the suffrages of the faithful.

"8. I do likewise believe that the saints reigning with Christ are to be worshipped and prayed unto; and that they do offer prayers unto God for us, and that their relics are to be had in veneration.

"9. I do most firmly assert, that the images of Christ, of the blessed Virgin, the mother of God, and of other saints, ought to be had and retained; and that due honour and veneration ought to be given to them.

"10. I do affirm, that the power of indulgences was

left by Christ in the church; and that the use of them is very beneficial to Christian people.

"11. I do acknowledge the holy Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church, to be the mother and mistress of all churches: And I do promise and swear true obedience to the bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles, and vicar of Jesus Christ.

"12. I do undoubtedly receive and profess all other things which have been delivered, defined, and declared by the sacred canons and œcumenical councils, and especially by the holy synod of Trent; and all things contrary thereunto, and all heresies condemned, rejected, and anathematized by the church, I do likewise condemn, reject, and anathematize."

Lo! here, my friends, ye have a fair prospect of popery, without any misrepresentation, or so much as comment; for these are the words of the creed itself, which all papists are obliged to believe and profess, in order to salvation; and which all those who enter into religious orders do solemnly swear unto. And, therefore, it is plain that these things are not looked upon by the church of Rome as disputable opinions, but as necessary articles of faith; and, therefore, let the author of the Case of the Regale and Pontificate, see how he can make good the last concluding words of his book, which are these: *Concors Romanæ et Reformatæ Ecclesiæ Fides*, &c.: *i. e.* "the faith of the Roman and Reformed Church doth agree," or "is the same," &c. For if these things be so slight and trivial to him, that he can (as the Popish Gallican church doth) swallow and digest all, excepting the 11th Article; he must pardon others, if they continue in the faith of the reformed church, as that which is opposite to the Roman creed, in so many momentous particulars.

Nay, let me add one thing further here, as a necessary consectary or inference from what I have said, in relation

to this consideration we are still upon: that, as our reformers did justly separate from the Romish church; so we have just ground also to continue separated from that antichristian party.

Let others, under pretence of a dread of what they call schism, run back into antichristian errors and heresies. Let them, if they are so disposed, forsake pure Christianity, that they may promote the priests' power, and adorn their altars with gold and jewels. And let them, in order to enslave men's consciences and bodies both, sound a retreat to Babylon again. We, I hope, know our duty better, than to run the risk of damning our souls, by becoming renegados to that bloody and wicked party, against whose abominations so many thousands of our ancestors witnessed, under racks and torments, and at the stake in Smithfield and elsewhere. They believed that what they did and suffered was in obedience to the call of God, saying, Come out from the apostate Romish church, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. (Rev. xiii. 4, 5.) And God forbid that any temptation should bring any of us back again to that sink of all impurities and errors, after we have enjoyed the sunshine of the gospel, in its purity and power, so long. Therefore, seeing we know what interest we are to keep to, let us be faithful to it, by doing all we can for its security, establishment, and honour. And if God call us to suffer for it, let us act as the former heroes of the reformation have done before us, that Christ may be glorified and the church edified by us, whether it be by doing or suffering, by life or by death.

The fifth and last observation that I shall propose to your thoughts, as the conclusion of all I have said, is this, that though we are not to live to see the great and final destruction of the papacy, the blessed millennium,

or Christ's last coming to judge the world: yet, seeing death is the equivalent of all these to us, if we be so happy as to get into Paradise; we ought, therefore, accordingly, to spend and improve our time, that we may partake of the future glory when we go hence.

I say, death is the equivalent of all these things to us, if we be so happy as to get into Paradise. For then we shall get the conquest over all antichristian enemies, and be with Christ in a better state than any earthly millennium can be supposed to be, waiting until He come to judge the world, and till we appear also with him in glory, having reassumed our then glorious bodies.

Improve your time, therefore, and all the opportunities and advantages of it, with your utmost diligence and seriousness, as remembering that ye are dying and accountable creatures, and that your time is given you for this very end, that ye may prepare for a better world.

And now that we see the beginning not only of a new year, but of a new age, I must give a further vent to my zeal and concern for your souls' good, upon this great and practical head—viz. the improvement of time with respect to the upper world, that when I am gone, I may, by what I have said, and am about to say, continue to speak still to those that shall survive me, and even (if this Discourse last so long) to succeeding generations also. And I suppose ye will the more readily bear with me in this, when ye remember with what unanimity and importunity ye desired me to print a Sermon on this head, which I preached on New Year's Day, 1699, from Psalm xc. 12. For, seeing I was prevented in yielding to your desire then, I shall lay hold on this opportunity to make amends, in some measure at least, for that seeming neglect, by presenting you with some useful hints on this subject.

And here, as I begin to speak upon this head, the story of Xerxes comes to my remembrance; who, when

he saw his vast army of a thousand thousand men march by (with whom he expected to have swallowed up the poor Grecians), is reported to have wept, upon this thought, that before a hundred years should run out, none of all that multitude would be alive; little imagining, that before the end of that very year, he was to see the destruction of almost all of them, and draw his last breath himself also. For, methinks, it is a serious and weighty thing to think, that before the end of this century, all those that now make a figure in the world, will have finished their course, and be gathered into heaven or hell; new actors coming upon the stage, in their stead. And yet, while I lengthen out my meditation to the end of a century, I find just reason to contract my thoughts, and I suppose I see both you and all others, that crowd our streets and places of worship, or fill remoter islands and continents, gradually dropping into an eternity, some this year, some the next, and so on.

But to proceed to the consideration of the subject in hand: I suppose I need not tell you what we are to understand by the improvement of time; seeing this is too plain to need any explication in a general sense. And neither can it be dark to Christians, in a spiritual sense. For it can denote nothing else, but such a rational and religious regulation of our time and disposal of our talents and opportunities, especially as we live under the advantages and means of the gospel, that we may ever be occupied in doing and getting good, so as to find favour in the sight of God, and attain afterwards to the happy enjoyment of him. For, seeing, as the apostle says (2 Cor. vi. 1, 2), now is our accepted time and day of salvation, we ought to take heed to ourselves, that we receive not the grace of God in vain. We ought to reckon, therefore, that this space of our life is given us, that we may be taken up in promoting the honour of God, and our own and other men's good, as being, in all

these respects, in a state of trial. Let us therefore improve our time, by labouring to gain our own assent and consent fully to the terms of the gospel, by studying the word of God more and more; by a close and impartial trial of ourselves; by frequent and fervent prayer, and by a universal and constant obedience to all God's laws and institutions. And let us argue ourselves into this as our duty, by considering how dearly our Lord Jesus has purchased our day of grace and opportunity of salvation; how many have been damned and lost for ever, by their not improving this talent of time; how dreadful the condemnation of such will be who choose darkness rather than light; how unreasonable it is to be so careful of the body, and so regardless of the soul; how strange it is, that we should not do that for our eternal advantage, which worldlings do for a little temporal gain; and lastly, how uncertain we are of the continuance of our time and season of grace.

And seeing, in order to improve time aright, we ought to lay hold of all the special seasons and peculiar opportunities which God puts into our hand for this end; these will deserve to be particularly considered by us. But since it is the work of prudence, that every man know and observe his own circumstances and providential occurrences, in order to a right improvement of them accordingly; all that I can do here, is to hint at some generals this way. Therefore 1. Let me advise you to make a right improvement of the circumstances of your outward lot in the world. Are you in a state of prosperity? Then, be thankful to your gracious Benefactor. Are ye honoured? Improve this, that God may be honoured through you. Are ye in any place of power and authority? Lay yourselves out to advance the kingdom of God among men. Are ye rich? Remember what Solomon says, "That wisdom is good with an inheritance" (Eccles. vii. 11); and therefore serve God

with what he gives you. But if ye be in adversity, despond not, but remember, that as prosperity gives men greater advantages for doing good, adversity affords more seasons, usually, for getting good. For in the day of adversity we are more ready to think and consider, than in the time of prosperity, as Solomon says (Eccles. vii.); for then is the time and season to consider the vanity and uncertainty of the world, to know ourselves better, and God more, and to prepare more readily and thoroughly for another world. 2. Improve your circumstances in relation to company or retirement. If ye be hurried with company, labour to gain that by them, which may in some measure make up your loss of time. If ye can get no good from them, then study, if possible, to do them good, by insinuating what may tend to their advantage, and then ye can have no reason to reckon your time lost. But if ye enjoy the company of good and wise men, it is not to be believed what profit and advantage may be got by mutual discourses to edification, where men are communicative, and can bear with different apprehensions about things, without running into heats and quarrellings. But if we are shut out from company, we may justly look upon solitude and retirement, as a happy opportunity of advantage and profit, if we do but know how to improve the same, by filling up such seasons with study, meditation, and prayer. 3. Improve the means and opportunities of grace and salvation. For the end of all that Christ has suffered and done for us, is to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify us to himself a people zealous of good works. (Tit. ii. 14.) Therefore let us so hear the word preached, and so join with the prayers of the church, and so partake of the ordinances of Christ, particularly that of the Lord's supper, that we may be built up a spiritual house, as lively stones, concurring to the raising up of such an edifice; and that we may

become also a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable by Jesus Christ to God. (1 Pet. ii. 5.) And 4. If at any time or upon any occasion, ye find the Spirit of God to move your thoughts and affections more sensibly than usual, as the angel moved the waters of the pool, of old; oh! my friends, neglect not such a fair gale and favourable opportunity, but improve this happy season, and strike the iron when hot and malleable. For how dreadful must it be to quench the Holy Spirit, and stifle the convictions, motions, and influences thereof, especially such as are sensible and peculiar.

But seeing, to begin aright, is one great mean to carry on a thing successfully, we ought to set about the improving of our time as early as we can, without any delay or procrastination in a matter of this weight and moment. For it is only our present time that we can reckon ours. For as our yesterdays are irrecoverable, so our to-morrows are but may-bes and uncertainties. Therefore we are always called to hear God's voice to-day, if we will do it at all. And, therefore, let us not delay, but make haste to keep God's righteous and holy commandments. (See Heb. iii. 7, 13, 15; chap. iv. 7; 2 Cor. vi. 2; Luke xix. 42; Isa. lv. 6; Job xxii. 21; Mat. v. 25; Psalm cxix. 60.)

Now, if we would improve our time and life to advantage this way, let us be sure not to neglect the morning of time. And here, then, let me put you in mind of four mornings of time. The 1st is the morning of your life, *i. e.* the time of your youth, health, and strength. Such of you as have lost this season, in whole or in part, pray double your diligence, in the improvement of what remains of your time. But such of you as are young, be advised to remember your Creator in the days of your youth, (Eccles. xii. 1), and act so as you may afterwards look back upon your past

days with satisfaction and pleasure. 2. The morning of every day is a time to be peculiarly improved for God and your own good; for the doing so has a mighty influence upon us as to the right spending of the rest of the day. It is a reason, that is not only *amica musis*, a friend of study, as the old saying is, but that is favourable also *oratione et devotioni*, to prayer and devotion; for while our minds are fresh and undisturbed with the hurries of company and business, it is certainly the fittest time for duty as well as study. And, therefore, the saints of old were careful not to neglect this season, (see Psalm v. 3; xcii. 2; Job i. 5; Mark i. 35; Acts v. 21.) 3. Improve the morning of every week carefully, viz. the Lord's day. For as we discharge our duty then, we may expect God's blessing through the week, more or less. But if we refuse to give God what is his due on his own day, we must not think it strange, if God withdraw from us on those days that he has allowed us to serve ourselves upon. And hence it is no wonder, if we find that true, which many have confessed with sorrow at the hour of death, that the profanation of the Lord's day has been the inlet to all their after-sins and miseries both. And 4. Perhaps it may not be unprofitable for us, to set apart the morning of every year, to review what we have done, and what has happened to us the year past, and to beg God's blessing through the year following. It has been the practice of some holy persons to do this; some reckoning the year, as it is usual with us in our computations, from the 1st of January; and others reckoning from the day of their birth, or baptism, or conversion; in all which every one may take which way pleaseth him best. And now, that we enter upon the morning or beginning of a new century, let me beseech you to begin this work now, if ye have neglected it during the years of the last age, which ye have run through, whether these have been more or fewer.

Having thus given you an account of time, and the opportunities and seasons of it to be improved, I shall proceed to recommend this duty from three considerations, and then to direct you how to do it, by proposing three rules to be observed this way.

In the first place, therefore, let me earnestly recommend this duty to you from three weighty considerations.

The first consideration is this, that it is the duty and wisdom of every one of us, to be duly and deeply impressed with the sense of the worth and value of time.

I might take occasion here to show you, from innumerable examples, that the best and wisest men, in all ages, both Christians and heathens, have been under the deepest and most constant impressions of the value of time. But, as this would be too long for this place, so it is needless to insist upon it, seeing I believe ye can as little form an idea of a wise or good man, that does not value and improve time, as I can.

Therefore, I suppose, there is no need to prove to you the worth and preciousness of time. To you, I say, who know the uncertainty of it, and yet how much depends upon the improvement and loss of it. But if any of you need any awakening this way, consider how valuable time will appear to a convinced sinner when he lies upon a death-bed, who sees himself dropping into another world, and yet apprehends that his peace is not made with God. Oh, cries the poor wretch, that I had spent less of my time on the world and my lusts, and more of it minding the good of my own soul! Oh that I had those hours and days back again that I spent in taverns and bad company! Oh for a year, or a month, or a week, at least, of health and strength, to make my peace with God! And pray, my friends, were ye never sick, and under some such thoughts then? Were ye not sensible then of mis-spent time? Or did ye never promise amendment and reformation, if God should recover you?

Where is now the performance of your vows? Oh, if there be any that forget God, and neglect to do as they have promised and resolved, let them consider their duty and interest in time, lest God tear them in pieces, when there is none to deliver them. Alas, my friends! what would those poor wretches give for one day, nay for one hour, who are now in the infernal prison? What would they give for one offer of a Saviour, who are now lamenting their slighting of the gospel, and their mis-spending their time and opportunities of salvation? Therefore do ye learn to value time more, and improve it better, before it be too late to retrieve lost opportunities. And this leads me to another consideration. Therefore,

The second consideration is, that it is our wisdom, not only to be impressed with the sense of the worth and value of time, but to be duly and deeply affected and influenced this way, so as to set about the improvement of it, as our greatest and most concerning duty and interest.

For it is not speculation but practice that we are to mind here: and, therefore, if our apprehensions of the worth of time do not influence us to improve it, they will only tend to our greater condemnation. Therefore, that what I have said may so affect you, as to incite you to your duty this way; I shall not grudge a little pains in writing further on this head, in hope that ye will not be weary in reading what is written. Take it not amiss, therefore, if I address you with some seriousness and warmth of affection, and, throughyou, all others that may cast their eyes upon these sheets.

My dear friends, some of you have lived twenty, some thirty, some forty, some fifty, some sixty, or more years in the world. Now, I beseech you to consider what ye have been doing all this time. Have your performances borne any proportion to the mercies ye have received from God? Have ye been faithful to improve your talents

for your God and Saviour? Have your convictions brought forth a saving conversion? Have your resolutions and promises been all performed? Has it been a matter of conscience to you, to serve God with the best of your time, the greatest vigour of your thoughts, the utmost energy of love and delight, and, in a word, with all your heart and strength?

If ye have been deficient this way, then pray consider not only how impossible it is to bring back any part of the time that is past, but how little, or, at least, how uncertain the time is, that remains to be lived over. And if any be secure this way, because they are young, or strong and healthful, let them remember how often the old carry the young to the grave, and the weak and sickly see robust and vigorous persons drop off before them. And what is our life at longest? Does not the Scripture labour, as it were, under a want of metaphors, to describe its vanity, when it compares it to a hand-breadth, a span, a vapour, the grass that is soon mowed down, the flower that quickly fades, the shadow that declines, and the tale that is told? How poor a thing then is it, to be able no otherwise to number our days and years; than by our being born at such a time, and having lived to such another time? There is, therefore, no more unreasonable desire in the world, than to live long, where there is no concern to live well: for this is only to wish to have more time to mis-spend, to sin longer than others, and to be more miserable in the other world. Besides, that it is impossible, as the course of things is now, to live long in a proper sense: for, as the following distich expresses it,

Vivere quisque, diu quærit, bene vivere nemo:
At bene quisque potest, vivere nemo diu.

That is—

To live long, all desire; to live well, none:
Yet all may live well, but none can live long.

For is it not for this very end that time is given us, that it may be improved and lived well, in order to our being fitted and prepared for the happy state of a glorious immortality? Surely God did never make so glorious a creature as man, endued with an immortal soul, merely to live the life of the beast, to eat, and drink, and sleep, or to enjoy his sensitive lusts and pleasures.

Think then, my friends, that according as ye improve or mis-improve time, ye are to be happy or miserable for an eternity. For we are now in a state of trial, and upon our behaviour, in order to be rewarded or punished afterwards as we shall be found to have acted, when we come to be judged: therefore we may rejoice now, and take our pleasure as we please (Eccl. xi. 9); but we have reason to rejoice with trembling, (Ps. ii. 11,) when we remember that we are to be called before God, and judged for all we do now. For they that live in the flesh (1 Pet. iv. 2, 5) according to their lusts, must give an account to him, that is to be the Judge of the quick and the dead. And then every one of them will hear that dreadful word, "Take the unprofitable servant, and cast him into the outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," (Matth. xxv. 25.)

Consider, therefore, that it is impossible to recall any moment of time that is lost, in a proper and physical sense: and that thus it is a foolish and ridiculous wish; *O mihi præteritos referat si Jupiter annos!* O if God would give me back the years that are past! But yet in a moral sense, we may be said to bring back past time, when, by doubling our diligence, we do, in some sort, retrieve the mis-improvement of former days. But then it must be remembered, that this must be done now or never; for if our time comes to an end here, there is no returning to a state of trial again, such as we now enjoy: "If a man die, shall he live again?" No, alas, says

Job: "For, as the cloud is consumed, and vanisheth away; so he that goeth to the grave, shall come up no more (*i. e.* to live on earth again, as the following words explain the meaning). He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more." Therefore let us all say with him, and improve the thought, "When a few years are come, then shall I go the way whence I shall not return." (See Job vii. 9, 10, xiv. 14, xvi. 22.)

Now, besides all these things, it may be of great use to enforce this consideration, to take a view of the complexion and genius of our age, or the time wherein we live. For if the apostle Paul, when he exhorts his cotemporary Christians to redeem the time, gives this as the reason of his advice, "Because the days are evil," (Eph. v. 16), I am sure we have much more reason to call the days wherein we live by this name. For the sense of the apostle, when he calls the days wherein he lived, evil days, is no doubt this chiefly, if not only, that they were afflictive and perilous times: for times of trouble are called evil times, or evil days, frequently in Scripture. (See Gen. xlvii. 8; Psal. lxxvii. 19; Amos v. 13, 18.) But we may justly take this in a larger sense, in reference to our times; for an age or time may be denominated evil, either with respect to the abounding of errors, profaneness, or calamities. And upon all these accounts these days of ours may be justly said to be evil. For as to errors, how many and how gross are these! How many deny the Lord that bought them! How many oppose his Divinity and satisfaction both! Yea, how many revile him as an imposter, and ridicule all revealed religion! Nay, how many dare blaspheme God, and deny his being, and even the first principles of natural religion? And, as to profaneness and immorality, where did we ever hear or read of more among Christians? Nay, it may be a question, if ever the heathens were worse than the

Christians are now. And, again, as for calamities and troubles, we see what other churches have suffered of late, and do suffer still; and we see in how tottering a condition all the Protestant interest is. And though, I believe, it will prove a burdensome stone to the enemies of Christ; yet how far God may suffer them to prevail for a time, none of us know: only I am afraid we are upon the brink of very great troubles. And that (as I have hinted already), as we have been, like Israel of old, peculiarly blest with mercies and privileges, and are as peculiar and singular in sinning; so we are like to be punished in a peculiar and particular manner also. So that if there be (as sure there is) a rule to judge of the connexion of mercies, sins and judgments, we may see our case, as well as that of Israel of old, in the prophetical threatenings of God to that people, when he says, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities." (Amos iii. 2.)

Seeing, therefore, this is the state and complexion of our time, let us take heed to ourselves, that we be not involved in the sins of it, lest we come under the judgments also that seem to hasten on this generation. Consider, for this end, the Apostle's advice; "Beware, (says he,) lest as the serpent beguiled Eve, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." (1 Cor. xi. 3.) Let us not, therefore, hear the instruction that causeth us to err from the words of knowledge, (Prov. xix. 27), but let us beware, lest, being led away with the error of the wicked, we fall from our own steadfastness. (2 Pet. iii. 17.)

But yet be not so selfish as to mind only your own concerns, but remember that ye are members of a city, of a church and nation, and that ye are members also of the catholic church of Christ, that is everywhere dispersed. And therefore act as under all these ties and

relations. And if ye can do no more, intercede at least with God, that he may be gracious; stand in the gap, that ye may, if possible, avert his displeasure. Act, therefore, as serious, faithful, and importunate remembrancers of the Lord, giving him no rest, but crying unto him night and day, until he arise, and until he make his Zion and Jerusalem a praise in the whole earth. (See Isa; lxii. 6, 7. Luke xviii. 7.)

There is yet a third consideration, which I would add to the former, in order the more effectually to recommend this duty to you—viz. the improvement of your time. And this is what is indeed frequently insisted upon, but I am afraid, very little lived up to—viz. that we are in the sight, and under the inspection of an all-seeing God, who is to be our Judge at last.

O, my friends, is this a matter of speculation to you? Dare any of you do that in the sight of God, which ye would be ashamed to do in the view of the world?

Even the heathen moralist, Seneca, adviseth men to act in all things, as if they had both God and the wisest and best of men looking on. "Set Cato, Scipio, or Lœlius before you," says he, "or some such excellent person, upon whose appearing even the most wicked person would be frighted from doing amiss openly." But he adds in another place, "What will it avail you to hide yourselves and your actions from men, since there is nothing concealed from God? For he looks into our breasts, and is present in our very minds and hearts." And elsewhere, "It avails a man nothing," says he, "to shut up or stifle conscience, since every thing we do lies open to God's view, and therefore our great wisdom is act so, that we may approve ourselves to him."

How consonant are such expressions to the sacred standard of our holy religion? and what shall we answer to our Master at the great day, if we suffer such persons to exceed and outrun us, who are Christians. Let us,

therefore, mind the principle that swayed Joseph when he said under a very great temptation, considering his low and obnoxious condition, "Shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Gen. xxxix. 9.) And let us imitate David, who set the Lord always before him, and looked upon him as present at his right hand, to the end that he might never be moved, but be encouraged still to trust in him, (Psalm xvi. 8.) For we are ever to remember that our secret, as well as public sins, are set in the light of God's countenance, (Psalm xc. 8,) seeing the darkness hides us no more from God, than the meridian light of the sun. (Psalm cxxxix. 12.)

But we must consider likewise, that we have not only a constant witness and inspector of our actions without us, but one within us, even our own conscience, which doth excuse or accuse us, according as we behave and act. And as one says well on this head, "*Quid prodest non habere conscium, habenti conscientiam? i. e.* What avails it to have no witness of our actions, while we have a conscience that keeps an exact register of all we do? "Only we must remember that this is but a secondary witness: "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knows all things," (1 John iii. 20.)

And now, my friends, I have done with what I had to say to the three considerations, from which I proposed to recommend and enforce this great duty of improving our time. And I leave it to you to consider whether what I have said be not sufficient this way through the blessing of God, and your pains and concern to apply to yourselves what has been said.

Therefore, in the second place, I proceed to direct you, how ye may attain rightly and successfully to improve your time to the best advantage, as ye are Christians and accountable creatures. And this I shall do, by proposing three rules, which will take in all that

is necessary or useful this way, though the first rule is the principal and only direct one, which doth take in the whole of our duty this way; the second and third being only subservient unto this, though exceedingly useful, if not necessary also in their places.

The first rule is this: that ye take heed that ye lose not your time, and the opportunities and seasons thereof, by sin and vanity; but that it be always filled up with the conscientious and diligent discharge of all necessary duties.

This being, as I said already, the principal rule, in order to the regulation of our time; and being so contrived, as to direct us both negatively and positively, as to what we are to avoid and what we are to do; I shall accordingly consider it distinctly in both the parts of it.

The first part of this rule teaches us how time is lost, and what we are therefore to avoid, in order to the right improvement of it. And it is necessary to premise this, before we consider the other part: for we can only then apply ourselves to fill up our time wisely, in the performance of those duties, in the discharge whereof the redemption and improvement of time consists; when we apprehend what those things are, which are detrimental and hurtful to our souls, both here and hereafter.

Now, in the general, we are to take care to rescue our time out of the hand of those two grand robbers, that thieve it away from us—viz., Sin and Vanity. For as we are carefully to avoid the mis-spending of our time, by thinking, doing, or speaking what is sinful in itself; so we are to take heed of such things which, though they are not simply sinful in themselves, are yet such trivial matters or by-concerns, as become sinful to us, when we spend too much time upon them, or mind them as if they were our most weighty and principal business.

But because those things that are evil and sinful in themselves, such as blasphemies and lies, immorality and

profaneness, ought not to be so much as named among Christians, or have a moment's time allowed them, so as to be entertained or thought upon with delight or design, far less brought forth in life and action, we shall therefore pass by these wholly at present, in order to consider those things that, though lawful in themselves, ought not to be so minded as to take up all or most of our time. Allow me, then, to give you my advice in these things following.

Be not too prodigal of your time in the gratification of your senses, and the services of your body. Let the cultivation and adorning of your souls, take up more of your time, than the clothing and dressing of your bodies. Be not buried in sleep and sloth too long, while time is so short and uncertain, and ye have so much business to fill it up with. Neither do ye allow yourselves more time than is necessary or convenient, for the feeding and pampering of your bodies. Be not like them, therefore, who are so severely reproved by God, for living sensually in this world, when they ought to have minded higher things. Of whom this sad character is given ; that they put away far from them the evil day ; that they lay upon beds of ivory, and did eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the stall, chanting at the sound of the viol, drinking wine out of bowls, and anointing themselves with the chieftest ointments ; but that, in the mean time, they were altogether unmindful of the state of the church, and no way grieved for the afflictions of Joseph, (Amos vi. 3—6.) Therefore (as the apostle exhorts, Rom. xiii. 13, 14,) let us walk honestly, as in the day (or clear sunshine of the gospel), not in rioting (or in dancings) and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying : for these things (says he) are the making provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

Spend not too much of your precious time in divertive

exercises and recreations. We may, indeed, use these not only lawfully but profitably, both with respect to the health and strength of the body, and the vigour even of the mind; which being unbended for a while with innocent amusements, will be in better case to return again to close thinking. But we must not make recreation our business, as too many do, who are so intoxicated with the secret witchery of gaming, as to have their minds rendered almost incapable of any close application to serious and important matters.

Spend not too much of your time in company and discourse, unless business oblige you do so. The company of atheistical and wicked men, especially if they be witty, and of an engaging temper, carries commonly an infection with it, and their discourse breathes a secret and insinuating poison, that every one has not a strong enough antidote in his nature to resist. And though the company we associate ourselves with be good, yet we are to remember the old saying, *amici sunt fures temporis*, that friends are frequently the thieves that rob us of our time; the commodity that, of all others, we are to be most parsimonious of, seeing we can never retrieve its loss. To visit friends, is often a great duty; but it is frequently to the hurt both of the visitors and visited that these are made. For as much time is commonly lost this way to no purpose, so the discourses that are the entertainment of most companies, are too often mere vanity, if not worse; for it is too customary at such times to give way to foolish talking and jesting, or to censorious reflections upon other persons. There is an innocent freedom indeed, and facetiousness in discourse, which is both allowable and pleasant; but, alas, how soon doth this degenerate, if great care be not taken to keep our minds in a right poise! And if I appear to any to be to rigid in what I say on this head, let it be remembered, that Christ has forewarned us, that we

must give an account of every idle word, as well as unwarrantable action, in the day of judgment. (Matt. xii. 36.) As, therefore, we are to avoid moroseness on the one hand, so we are to take care that we tire not our friends by too frequent or too long visits. There are some such friends in the world, though very rare to be found, who, the more they are together, do the more love and profit one another. But as to ordinary friends, the case is quite otherwise. In relation to whom, Soloman gives this wise advice, "Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's house, lest he be at last weary of thee, and so hate thee." (Prov. xxv. 17.) That is, according to the gloss of some upon the words, Make thyself precious, wear not out every man's threshold, by obtruding thyself upon them; neither make thyself vulgar and cheap, as a mean commodity, that is every man's money.

But remember also, that ye may be guilty of mis-spending your time in vain and unprofitable musings, as well as in vain discourse. Idle thoughts are as foolish a mis-spence of time as idle words. For every sort of thinking and meditating is not judicious no more than holy. And though a man think not upon his lusts, he may think very impertinently, and consequently sinfully.

And this is not only the fault and weakness of plebian, but of learned heads, who mis-spend time frequently as much as any other sort of men, upon their *difficiles nugæ*, their useless, yet painful curiosities and niceties. This was the custom of the learned doctors of old Athens, who spent their days in almost nothing else but telling or hearing some new notion, scheme, or theory, and then disputing, *pro et contra*, for and against it. (Acts xvii. 21.) But while they are earnest to dispute about *forma substantialis*, *universale a parte rei*, *fuga vacui*, apathies, the possibility of motion, and such like *nugæ* and whims, they forgot God and solid religion, and were such sceptics, or superstitiously ignorant (for

ye may interpret the words either way), that in the midst of their multitude of gods, they were willing to erect one altar more, with this inscription, (ver. 23), AGO-OTHEO, "To the unknown God." It is true indeed, that there are many curiosities of this kind, that a wise man may improve to great advantage. But when they are made our main or only business and study, instead of being *parergons* or by-studies, we are certainly far out of the road of true wisdom. What profit has the metaphysician, in abstracting from all particular beings, that he may define *ens* generically, as *unum*, *verum*, *bonum*, while he is ignorant of Him that is truly such. To how little purpose, at length, will the mathematician find he has studied, in order to adjust and determine the proportions of points, lines, sides, and angles, if he neglect the proportions of piety and virtue? What will it avail the astronomer to see the planets through a tube, if he fall short of the happy world at last, that is above all these? Is any man the better for being able to adjust and reconcile the Egyptian, Chaldee, and Grecian dynasties, by reducing all the different eras of nations to the Julian period, while he neglects to number his own days so, as to apply his heart to true wisdom? And, lastly, what advantage has any man, by being able to speak all the languages in the world, while he worships and praises God in none of them?

Nay, I tell you further, that a man may even misspend his time in the service and worship of God, circumstantially considered. For though we worship God, yet what advantage can we reap by it, if we do so, ignorantly or hypocritically, or customarily or merely for the fashion, or profanely and irreverently, or dully and heartlessly? Nay, we may lose our labour this way also, when by this we thrust out more immediately incumbent and necessary duties; or when we neglect the performance of this, till we be altogether unfit for it,

offering thus to the Lord a corrupt thing, while we have a male in our flock.

And if thus we may mis-spend time, how much more are we like to do so, while the cares of the world, and the inordinate desire of what we call its pleasures, profits and honours, jostle out religion, both from our thoughts and lives? Solomon adviseth us not to labour to be rich, but he immediately subjoins, "Cease from thy own wisdom," (Prov. xxiii. 4, 5.) Whereby he insinuates, that a man must be mortified to his carnal and worldly ratiocinations, and taught by the spirit of God to know the true value of things, before he can possibly learn this lesson from him. However he positively determines these two things. That he that hasteth to be rich, hath an evil eye; and that he that does so shall not be found to be innocent. (Prov. xxviii. 20—22.) Mottos that all men might find it convenient to write on the head of their books of accounts. And if Solomon's words have little effect upon you, consider what a greater than Solomon says of a covetous or anxious disposition and practice in the 6th chapter of Matthew, where he represents and condemns it as unchristian and heathenish, and as unreasonable and pernicious. And, after all, remember these serious and pungent words of his, "What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul." (Matth. xvi. 26.)

And now, I hope, I have said enough as to the things we ought to avoid, if we would rightly improve our time, but, seeing it is not sufficient to know how time is lost, unless we know also what we are to be occupied about, and wherein the best and wisest disposal of our time stands; therefore we must further consider the great and necessary duties with which we ought to fill up the seasons and vacuities of our life. And therefore I proceed now to

The second part of this great and principal direction concerning the improvement of our time. Which is this, that we take care to fill it up with the conscientious and diligent discharge of all necessary duties.

And here, though in the general we cannot but know, that our time is wholly to be taken up in getting and doing good, yet we must remember, that it is only in relation to time that we are to consider our duties in this place. And therefore, I am only to consider here those great and necessary duties which are always obligatory upon us, and the neglect of which is inseparable from the mis-improvement of time. For it cannot be supposed that I should so much as hint all those things that come under the general notion of duty; or consider those things which particular circumstances and emergence render obligatory to us, or such duties which are called relative, from the stations we are in, and the relations we bear to others.

There are therefore a few things only which I shall recommend to you as altogether useful and necessary, and which none of us can ever plead exemption from.

And, in the first place, let me beseech you to improve your time by frequent, diligent, and serious reading and studying the holy Scriptures. In the first book of which, ye will find your minds led up to the first antiquities, which no other book beside can furnish you with any just account of. There we see the origin of man and the world—man's primeval state, when first created—the original of sin, and death, and misery—the subversion of the first race of man, by the great deluge which heathen antiquities speak of only as through a cloud—the first spring and dawning of mercy and hope to lapsed man—the succession of the first and most primitive church, and the beginning and progress of Gentile idolatry, superstition, and wickedness—together with the first original of nations, cities, arts, goverments, lan-

guages—and in all these, the superintending providence of God, in its justice and goodness, wisdom and steadiness. And by this knowledge, we bring back, as it were, all past time, and make it our own as to our profit and advantage. In the other books of Moses, we have an account of God's erecting a poor, oppressed people to be a church, and God's peculiar possession. Wherein we see his wonderful appearance for them, by signs and miracles—his strange and unusual way with them in all their journey, in trying, feeding, and preserving them—his giving them laws, ecclesiastical, moral, and political, his wrapping up most profound mysteries under ceremonies and customs—and his bringing them into a noble country with power and glory, destroying their enemies before them—together with innumerable observable occurrences, and theoretical and useful things to be taken notice of therein. The historical part of the Old Testament, that follows that of the law, as the Jews call it, gives us a relation of most admirable and great revolutions and transactions as ever fell out in the world. Wherein we may observe the various, and yet uniform steps of divine providence in governing the world, and the church—God's trying, and yet rewarding the righteous—his permitting sin, and yet punishing sinners. In all which occurrences, we have the best examples that can be, to be imitated by us, and an account of the worst also, that we may avoid such pernicious courses. The book of Job is a mirror, wherein we may learn what afflictions the best men are liable unto, and what reproaches they may unjustly fall under, even by good men like themselves, through mistake and infirmity; as also, how we ought to behave in the time of calamity, and what the end of the Lord at length usually is. The Psalms are the most excellent model of practical and experimental piety, and the best prayer-book and directory for devotion that ever the world was blessed with. The

Proverbs of Solomon are the most excellent and refined ethics that were ever published, or ever will be. Ecclesiastes is the noblest picture and demonstration of the world's vanity. And Solomon's Song the most spiritual pastoral, the finest allegory, and the divinest poetical description of the love between Christ and devout souls, that ever saw the light. The prophetical writings, give us the noblest and distinctest idea of God's government of nations, and the righteousness and equity of all his providences and administrations, besides innumerable other lessons to be learned from thence.

And as for the New Testament, the first thing that occurs to us, is the most excellent part of the whole Bible. I mean the four-fold history of our blessed Saviour. O, let your thoughts dwell long, and strike deep here, for all the historical passages of the gospel, —all the wise and sage parables to be found there—all the miracles wrought—all the prophecies mentioned—all the truths revealed—and all the counsels and exhortations there given—I say, all these are as so many rich veins of what is more precious than the finest gold, and admirable and useful above all thought. The book of the Acts of the Apostles, gives us a noble and impartial account of the beginning and progress of the gospel, and the first settlement of the church. Wherein we have a naked and clear view of Christianity in its pure and primitive dress, together with some most profitable examples, and useful discourses. The apostolical Epistles give us a full and copious account of the religion of the blessed Jesus, both in its principles and practice, its original and design. So that these are sufficient alone, if rightly understood, to enlighten our minds, to influence our affections and designs, and to regulate our lives and conversations. And the book of the Revelation, though dark and enigmatical, represents to us in an august and lofty manner, the rectorship of our Lord Jesus in govern-

ing the world, over-ruling and disposing the designs and actions of men, and making all things at length work together for the illustration of his own glory, and his people's good.

Thus we see something of the special properties of the several parts of the scripture, and what excellent things may be learned from thence. But let us consider also those properties that are common to the whole Bible, and every part of it. Let us therefore look upon all the books that compose this sacred volume, as divinely inspired, and as designed, in all respects, for our profit and edification. (2 Tim. iii. 15.) Therefore let us read and study them, not as the word of men, but as they are indeed the word of God, *i. e.* so as to prize and value them according to their worth—to love and delight in them—to praise God for them—to meditate upon them as men, not as children—and to conform our lives wholly to them. And in order to become thus, the humble, impartial, and obedient scholars of Christ, let me put you in mind of one thing, than which nothing is more neglected, and yet nothing is more necessary in order to profit truly by the bible, viz., that ye have a care of laying down any opinion or scheme of opinions in matters religious, previously to your having impartially examined the sacred scriptures in such matters. For they that do so, come not to be taught of God, but to dictate to the Almighty, and are not afraid often to withdraw the sacred text, in order to force it to speak, not what it really does, but what they would have it do, as best suits with their prejudices, passions and party designs, that I say not lusts also. Therefore let me desire you (as I have often done from the pulpit) to make the Bible itself, and particularly the New Testament, your chief (and in a proper sense only) system, confession of faith, and creed. For whatever excellency there is in any human composures of this kind, we are to own them no farther

than we find them to agree and harmonize with the divine oracles.

In the next place, let us improve our time, by frequent, serious, and close meditation on divine and profitable things. Let the character of the blessed man, (Psalm i. 2, 3,) be ours, by our meditating on the laws and truths of God day and night. For to what purpose do we read the Scriptures, and other good books, if we be not at pains to penetrate into the things therein contained? Now, it were endless, and in some sense impossible to name all those things that may be profitably thought upon. But perhaps it may not be amiss to suggest to you the principal heads of sacred theology; by which, as so many avenues, ye may attain mentally to converse with God and truth.

In the first place then, meditate on God himself, his attributes, works and word, and the blessed persons of the Godhead. Then think on man in his first innocent state, in his lapsed condition, and begun recovery; and on thyself particularly, thy nature, thy faculties, thy state, thy faults, thy end, thy duties, and thy privileges and advantages. Meditate often on Jesus Christ, his person, his properties, his offices, his merits, his sufferings, his conquest, his business and work now in heaven, and his management of the church on earth, and the world in general. Then think of the Holy Spirit, his office, work and influences. And let the church also be considered in its obligations, ordinances, sufferings, progress and victory. And think likewise of the particular state of the saints of God on earth, their temptations, the principles by which they are acted, their conversation, and the promises made them. Hence let your minds be led in to contemplate the great blessings of true religion, such as conversion, justification, adoption, sanctification, peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, communion with God, the prelibations of heaven, and final perse-

verance. And then let your thoughts terminate upon what we call the last things. Think, therefore, on death, its certainty: yet the uncertainty of the time of it; the great change it brings upon us; how terrible it will be to be unprepared for it, and the happiness of being ready for so great a change. Then think upon the dissolution of this world, when the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and this vast pile of our planetary world become one great bonfire. And from thence let your minds contemplate the great day of judgment, those grand assizes, where all mankind must be impartially judged, and sentence be pronounced upon them accordingly. And after all let your thoughts pass beyond the limits of time, and step into the eternal state. There go down to the infernal prison for awhile and view the horrors of the place, the frightful aspect of the company, and the intenseness and perpetuity of the torments. Then mount the steep ascent, and soar aloft upon the wings of contemplation, to the blissful regions of the celestial paradise. There satiate your thoughts with the pleasures and beauties of the place, the felicity and joys of that state and government the excellency of the company, the glory of the discoveries made there, the noble employment that takes them up, and the eternity and immutability of all these. Think then upon these few hints, my friends, (where there are almost as many subjects as words) and ye can never want matter for your thoughts to work upon.

And now, seeing all our study and meditation must be so managed, that we may receive some real and abiding advantage, let us ever call ourselves to a serious and impartial account as to the spending of our time; for how can we satisfy ourselves, without conversing with our own souls, in order to know how it is with them. And how can we attain to know ourselves, if we never examine and try how it is with us? If merchants and men of business are so careful to set down everything in

their journals and books of account, that they may be able exactly to balance what they call their debit and credit, their losses and gains: ought not Christians to mind their eternal concerns, with the like exactness and accuracy? How wonderfully does Seneca speak on this head, when he tells us, that in imitation of one Sextius, whom he highly commends, he had been accustomed to examine himself every night. "When at night," says he, "the candle is out, and all is still and quiet, then do I look back upon, and search all the day past, by measuring and running over all I have thought, said, or done. I hide nothing from myself; I overlook and pass by nothing. I say to myself, so and so thou hast done unadvisably; do so no more. And again, I ask myself, what evil have I healed? What vice have I resisted? What passion have I moderated? What lesson have I learned? and what good have I done; And oh," says he, "what a sweet sleep follows, after this recognition of a man's self, when one is conscious of his impartiality and seriousness, in the review and censure of himself and his own manners!"

And to this purpose we find an excellent direction in the Golden verses, as they are called, of old Pythagoras; which begins thus, Μηδυωνον, &c. The sense of which I render thus:

> Before thine eyes to slumber sweet give place,
> Be sure the past day's journal first to trace.
> Survey thy steps and actions all: then say,
> Which good? which bad? how ordered were they?

Oh then, my friends, let not it be said of us, that we live in the neglect of this duty, lest heathens rise up in judgment against us and condemn us.

But since we are not born for ourselves only, let us be concerned to promote the good of others also. Let us therefore improve time, by being useful in our stations

to the church of God and good men, and to all as far as we can; for so we are obliged, as we are members of communities, cities and nations, and as we are inhabitants of the world. And in order to be thus useful, let us set before ourselves the glorious example of Christ, whose meat and drink it was, to do the will of his heavenly Father, and who went about always doing good. And, therefore, let us be ashamed to live as useless plants in the world, which do only cumber the ground.

And, in order to perform all these things aright, and so to improve our time to the best advantage, let us be sure to spend as much of our time in prayer, as possibly we can: for as it is thus that we attain to most immediate and direct communion with God; so it is this way that we attain to be strengthened and directed in the performance of all the duties we are obliged to be taken up in. Therefore let us remember, that it is not without just ground that we are commanded to pray always, and to pray without ceasing. (Eph vi. 16; 1 Thess. v. 17.) The sense of which expressions I take to be this: that as we are to keep up stated times of solemn prayer to God, and to have recourse to him, in a more special manner, upon extraordinary emergence and occurrences, in order to be peculiarly directed and assisted then from God; so we are ever to keep ourselves, as much as possibly we can, in a praying frame: and, for this end to fill up all the vacuities of other affairs and studies with ejaculatory prayers and breathings. But, besides all these things, there is one thing further that I never found any writer take notice of, that I look upon to be the principal design of such expressions: and this is, that we be careful to prosecute the design of our prayers from one time of our life to another, waiting for the answer of them, and improving the same in praise, when received, *e. g.* if a Christian pray long for a full victory over such or such a temptation or lust, let him prosecute this design in all

his prayers until he receive an answer; which, when he has got, let him turn this from the catalogue of his petitions to that of his thanksgivings. And so let him act also, with respect to mercies to be received, promises to be fulfilled, and miseries to be averted.

And thus I have at length finished the first and principal rule I had to propose to you, with respect to the improvement of time, in both the parts thereof. And now I am to hint to you two more, which are only subservient ones; though, at the same time, worthy of your most serious thoughts.

The second rule, therefore, is this, that in order to the right improvement and disposal of time, we do both dedicate ourselves solemnly to God, and as explicitly as we can, in order to spend our lives wholly in his service; and be concerned, in order to this, to keep a secret and exact register or diary of all our own actions, and the providences of God in relation to us.

But seeing I have hinted something in relation to both the parts of this rule in another discourse—viz., that concerning the ministerial work: I shall not therefore trouble you with any thing more upon either of these heads.

Only let me say this one thing further, in relation to the keeping of a diary or private register: that every man must be left to his own discretion as to the manner and method of adjusting those things that occur to him in his life. As, therefore, some may think it best to set things down according to the series of the time they fall out in: so others may look upon the method of heads, or common places to be the best, And if any serious person shall think this last way the best (for as to the first the method cannot be missed) he may perhaps find these heads not unreasonable or useless—viz. that after a short series of his life, to be further continued, he proceeds in this order.

1. To consider God's providence to him, in adapting and disposing of him for particular ends, agreeable to the faculties of his soul, and constitution of his body, together with his eternal circumstances, in a relation to both.

2. What his conversion has been, with the time and manner of it.

3. How far, and in what way he has been led into covenant with God, with the renovations of the same.

4. What crosses and troubles he has met with, and how far these have been improved and sanctified.

5. The dangers, spiritual or temporal, he has been delivered from.

6. The sins he is most inclinable unto naturally, and those he has been most guilty of and overcome by.

7. How frequently, in what manner, and upon what occasions, he has been deserted by his God; and, so far as he can conclude, for what ends these have happened to him.

8. What evidences he has had of the wrath and displeasure of God, upon the account of sin.

9. And what intimations he has met with of the love and kindness of his heavenly Father.

10. What temptations, inward or outward, he has been most assaulted by, and what he has found to be the best antidote and relief against these.

11. What observations and experiences he has met with, to confirm him in the belief of the Christian religion, as to the being of God, the divinity of Christ, and the existence of invisible powers.

12. What observable and remarkable things have happened to him, in his business, studies, or converse with men, that may be of use to himself or others, as to life and conversation in the world.

13. Particularly, what has occurred to him in the remarkable turns and changes of his life, in health and sickness.

14. What intimacy, familiarity and communion God has graciously admitted him into with himself; and what answers and returns of prayer God has granted him.

And 15. What special and peculiarly distinguishing circumstances he has been under, wherein the footsteps of a peculiar conduct have been conspicuous to him.

Under these heads I humbly suppose all things may be regularly disposed, that can be thought necessary to compose a private Christian's register. Though I presume not to dictate to any man, but leave every one to follow his own method.

The third and last Rule is this: That, in order to the right regulation of time, we set down some short, rational and natural directory, according to which we may be enabled and assisted rightly to improve our time,

But seeing every one is to compose this, according to his own circumstances, there is no man that can justly prescribe to another in this matter. Nay, there is none that can set to himself such a directory, as to all particulars, that he can be supposed to be tied up to, at all times; since the providence of God is so various this way, that our circumstances render our condition, and consequently our duty, almost as different as the weather is. And therefore a spiritual prudence is that which is to every one the great directory of his life. For when the providence of God renders our particular rules and methods impracticable, unlawful, or inconvenient, it is both our duty and wisdom to fall in with the present circumstances of things, rather than with our own arbitrary demonstrations; seeing, then, the state of the question is, Whether's God's method or ours should be followed?

All, therefore, that I shall propose to you here, is the consideration of three things; which are easily minded, and may be put in practice every day, whatever our circumstance are,

1. When we awake in the morning, let this be among

your first thoughts—how shall I spend this day to best advantage, for the honour of God, and my own good? And when ye have considered what is most proper to promote these ends; then firmly propose to yourselves your business through the day, and fixedly resolve upon acting so; and accordingly proceed and fall to work.

2. In the middle of all your business or studies, allow yourselves some time of breathing, in order to reflect upon these two things, viz. What ye are, and what ye do; putting these frequently to yourselves, by way of query, thus—What am I? *i. e.* am I sure I am in favour with God? am I indeed regenerated? am I spiritual in thought, affection, and design? And again; What do I? am I employed as I ought to be? are my ends right? are the means I make use of lawful and proper? are my studies, or my business such as I ought now to be occupied about? do I behave in all respects as one that is journeying towards the better country?

3. In the evening, sleep not before ye have examined yourselves, as to the actions and occurrences of the past day. But having spoken already to this duty, I shall only add here, that it will be of great use for you to examine yourselves as to two things, by way of question to yourselves, thus: What has God's providence been to me this day? what have I seen or heard that deserves special observation and improvement? what mercies have I received? what troubles have I met with? what dangers have I escaped? did God assist me, or desert me in my devotions and business? have I learned nothing new from his holy word? did he seem to receive, or shut out my prayers? And again, What has my way been towards God? have I done nothing to dishonour him, or to discredit my profession? have I acted so as to approve myself to my God, in thought and design, as well as in word and action? wherein have I failed in my duty? what have I done for religion? and what for my own

good, or the good of others? what have I done that I ought to beg the pardon of? and what have I to praise God for?

Now, my friends, I hope these three generals are easy, both to be remembered and practised. For as for the particular questions I have suggested, they are only proposed to show more fully the design of the general ones: and therefore every one may pick and choose, or vary from these, as his own circumstances do require, and as his prudence will direct: I only desire you, then, to remember the three heads themselves, with relation to the morning, the day, and the evening, as they are comprehended in these three mnemonical words, propose, reflect, and examine.

And thus I have at length come to the end of that which I had to say to you upon this great and practical head of improving time to the best advantage. Which I conclude with a few watch-words. Spend not your time so, as to be afterwards obliged bitterly to repent of what ye have done: spend no time on that which ye cannot review and look back upon with comfort: spend no time so, as ye dare not pray for a blessing from God upon what ye do: spend no time without some respect to God's glory, or your own and others' good. And be sure so to spend and improve your time, that your great work may be done before your life end; that when your few days are lived over, ye may joyfully enter in upon a happy eternity.

Now, having finished all I had to say, by way of improvement of the apocalyptical thoughts I have presented you with, I desire ye may candidly interpret my design, and favourably construe my performance. And one thing I hope ye will remember, that seeing this discourse is by way of epistle, I have therefore used an epistolary freedom, both in what I have said, and in the way of writing, not tying myself up to so close a method as in

other discourses, though I have not altogether neglected even that; but if I have failed in any respect, remember further, that I write to those I look upon to be my true, good, and kind friends. Let, therefore, the name and ties of friendship plead for me, where ye may discern my infirmities, and induce you to pass a favourable sentence upon my attempt to assist you in the way to heaven.

And now that I write to such dear friends, and have mentioned the ties of friendship, let me beg of you that ye would make it your business to live together as such: for there is nothing Christ has enjoined us more, than mutual love, insomuch as he has made it the badge of our Christianity, when he tells us, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." (John xiii. 35.) And therefore it was one great end of his coming into the world, to introduce a divine and universal friendship among men. (Eph. ii. 14—17, &c.) For as the devil promotes his kingdom in the world, by dissentions, emulations, hatred and malice: so our blessed master carries on his, by union, gentleness, peaceableness, universal kindness, love and charity.

But besides a general friendship, it would be of great use to cultivate a peculiar one with one or more, whose disposition is most agreeable to ours. And seeing there is little of this now to be found in this selfish age, let me give you such a description of it as may make you fall in love with it. And if this appear too florid, remember that, as the subject itself is so, it is part of a youthful composure of mine, in a letter to a worthy friend, who had desired my thoughts upon this head many years ago. "True friendship is a divine and spiritual relation of minds, a union of souls, a marriage of hearts, and a harmony of designs and affections; which, being founded on a known agreeableness, and entered into by a mutual hearty consent, groweth up into the purest kindness, and most endearing love; maintaining itself by the openest

freedom, the warmest sympathy, and the closest secrecy. And such friends are as twins, every way alike; or like sweet flowers, agreeing in beauty, like the rose and lily, the primrose and violet, twisted round one another, and mixing both colours and smells. Or they may be compared to two pleasant rivulets flowing from one spring and fountain, though separated perhaps by some unlucky rising of the ground; yet meeting again in some kind and flowery mead, which they bless by their cheerful and gentle meanders; and, it may be, thence separated again at some distance, where they glide along silently, murmuring now and then to another, and mutually complaining of the rude banks that obstruct their joining; until at length, having run their full course, and becoming one stream, they pour themselves forth into the great ocean itself, and become one with it also. So that, like the rest of the bitter sweets of this life, friendship has its ups and downs until it flow into heaven, from whence it took its rise; which is the consummation of all divine friendships, and where all true friends do at length happily meet, never to part."

And now, my friends, I shall conclude this long epistle in the words of a * famous doctor and father of the ancient church: "Learn, Oh faithful and religious men, and carefully apprehend the design of the gospel polity. For which end study to conquer fleshly lusts, to be humin heart, pure in mind, and masters of your passions. If ye are called to suffer, act heroically, and do something over and above mere passiveness, for the honour of your Lord. If ye are unjustly treated, evidence that ye are not contentious; if hated, love your enemies; if persecuted, endure it; and if reviled, answer no man otherwise than by prayer and good wishes. Die to sin, crucify

* Basil. Magn. in his Νουθεσια προς τους νεους. The words begin thus: Μαθε συ, ο πισοςτ ανθρωπος, &c.

your affections for God, and cast all your care upon your Lord and Master. That thus ye may at length reach the glorious place, where millions of angels, and the glorious assembly of the first-born are praising God, and where the holy Apostles, Prophets, Patriarchs, Martyrs, and all the righteous are. To this blessed society, let us labour and pray to be joined, through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory for ever."

Now, that both ye and I may attain, through grace, to be thus happy, is and shall be the serious, fervent, and constant prayer of,

My very dear Friends,

Yours to love and serve you in the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,

ROBERT FLEMING.

London, Jan. 1, 1701.

Being the first day both of the year and century.

A POSTSCRIPT,

CONTAINING A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF THE APOCALYPTICAL INTERPRETATIONS ADVANCED IN THE PRECEDING DISCOURSE.

After I had finished the foregoing discourse, and that all the sheets were almost printed, I was earnestly urged by a friend, to say something to secure the foundation I go upon: especially because the learning of Grotius and Dr. Hammond had influenced many to follow another way of interpreting the Revelation, as the reputation of Mr. Baxter had swayed others to think well of the same. And when I urged that Dr. More, in his Mystery of Iniquity, and Dr. Cressener, in his Demonstration of the first principles of the protestant interpretations of the Apocalyse, had done this sufficiently already: he replied, that these books were both voluminous and dark, and not easy to be purchased by every one; and that therefore some short account of this matter at this time seemed to be necessary. I urged many things against this, as that this advice came too late, and that should I contract never so much, it would swell this part of my book too much, to keep a due proportion with the other discourses,

and indeed make the whole too bulky. But after all, importunity and the respect I bore my friend, prevailed with me, to say something to all those things, that he thought I ought to premise. Therefore, not to spend any longer time in giving the reasons, why I did not speak to these things before, in their proper place, or why I do so now: I shall give my thoughts of this book and the first principles of the right interpretation of it, in some propositions, which do gradually lay the foundation of what I advanced before.

1st Proposition.—The Revelation was written by the Apostle John, and is a sacred and canonical book of the New Testament.

I hope there is no Christian that will dispute the truth of this proposition with me. For, besides that the style of John may be easily traced in this book, notwithstanding the difference of the subject from that which he wrote of it in his gospel and epistles: he does frequently make mention of himself, and that with such peculiar circumstances, as agree with none but the apostle; as we see chap. i. verse 1, 2, 4, 9. (See also chap. xxi. 2, and xxii. 8.)

I know indeed that some of the ancients doubted of this, as Caius, a Latin father, mentioned by Eusebius, (hist. lib. 3, cap. 28.) and Dionysius of Alexandria, who made a great noise against it for a while, as we see in Eusebius also, Hist. lib. 7. cap. 4. But yet even this man declares that he owns it to be a sacred book, though not written by the apostle John. Wherein he speaks, what we must look upon to be altogether absurd. For if St. John be not the author, it must be an imposture, seeing his name is inserted in it, as being the penman. So that if it be not St. John's, it is no sacred book. Or if it be a sacred book, the author is none but the beloved apostle. But the weakness and inconsistency of this, denies his reasons against this book, are sufficiently though briefly

exposed by Monsieur du Pin, both in his preliminary dissertation to his Bibliotheque des Auteurs Ecclesiastiques, and in his History of the Canon of the books of Scripture.

And if this were any argument against the divinity of this book, that some persons have doubted of it, or denied it to be canonical, there is hardly one book in the New Testament that would stand the test: seeing we find in the ancient church history that there have been not only particular men, but even sects of them, that have excepted, some against one book, and some against others. And we know, that the epistles of James and Jude, and the second and third epistles of John, and that admirable epistle of the Hebrews, have been controverted, as well as the Apocalypse: of the authority of which neither Papist nor Protestant, Grecian nor Armenian Christian doubts at this day.

And as all Christians do now acquiesce in the Revelation, as a canonical book; so excepting those I mentioned, and the heretics called Alogians, all the eminent fathers of the church received it of old. So did Justin Martyr, (Dialog. cum tryph. Irenæus, lib. iv. cap 37 and 50, and lib. v. cap. 30, and apud Euseb. lib. v. cap. 8; Tertullian, adv. Marc. lib. iii. cap. 23.) Origen in Mat. and in John, and apud Euseb. lib. vi. cap 25, and Eusebius himself, Hist. lib. iv. cap 28. Nay all the other Fathers agree in this also—viz. Epiphanius, Victorinus Theophilus, Cyprian, Methodius, Jerom; and other authors quoted by Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Jerom—viz. Melito, Hippolitus, Victorinus, &c.

But for my own part, were all these authorities wanting, there is that in this book itself, that would inforce me to own it as divine. For besides the augustness of its style, the wisdom of its contexture, and the purity of its design and counsels, there is something that I want a name for, that commands my belief and veneration, and

insinuates itself into my affection and conscience, as if Christ himself breathed something divine in every line. But the clear view of the fulfilling of the several parts of its prophecy, is an argument that even several other books of the New Testament want.

2nd Proposition.—The book of the Revelation of John was written after the destruction of Jerusalem.

The notion of Grotius, upon which his interpretation of the Apocalypse is founded, is this: That the seven kings or heads of the Beast, (mentioned Rev. xvii. 10,) are not to be understood of seven several forms of government, but of seven particular emperors—viz., Claudius, Nero, Galba, Otho, Vitellius, Vespasian, and Titus, and that Domitian is the eighth, who was of the seventh, because as he pretends, he governed during his father's absence.

The foundation which he lays, for the probation of this, is that John was banished into Patmos, in the reign of Claudius: but that though he saw his visions then, he did not write them till Vespasian's time. For he must make this last supposition, as well as the first, else his notion would be condemned immediately, seeing it is said, that five of these kings were fallen, (Rev. xvii. 10,) that is, says he and Hammond, when he wrote, not when he saw these visions. But how false this is, any body may see with half an eye; seeing these words are not John's but the angel's to him. And, therefore, the defenders of this opinion must find out five emperors that were fallen before Claudius, if they will restrict these heads of the Beast to particular men; for if the angel spake these words to John in the days of Claudius, they must relate to them that went before, or to none.

This is enough to destroy this notion of theirs, and I know how it is possible for any of their admirers to salve their credit this way. But seeing the principal thing they found upon, is this, that John saw the apocalyptical

visions in the days of Claudius, and that so all, or at least most of the Revelation relates to things that fell out before the destruction of Jerusalem; I shall say something further to disprove this assertion, and to confirm the verity of our proposition.

Now there are only two things adduced by Grotius and Hammond, to prove that John was in Patmos in Claudius' reign; the first is, that Claudius raised a persecution against both Jews and Christians, and that being the first persecutor, it is probable that John was banished at that time. The second is, that Epiphanius does expressly assert, that it was by Claudius that John was banished to Patmos.

As to the first of these, it is nothing but a supposition without any proof; for we have no account, either in the Acts of the Apostles, or any other writer, that Claudius did ever persecute either Jews or Christians. And Lactantius (de Mort. Pers.) does expressly assert, that no emperor did persecute the Christians before Nero. It is true, Suetonius says, "Claudius Judæos impulsore Chresto tumultuantes Roma expulit." And Luke tells us, that Claudius banished the Jews from Rome, which occasioned Aquila and Priscilla, and other Christian Jews, to retire from Rome; but neither of them say that he persecuted the Christians, or even the Jews. Now, as for the expression of Suetonius, "impulsore Chresto or Christo," the meaning must be this, that the Jews that did not believe, going about to stir up the government at Rome, as they did every where else, (as is plain from the books of the Acts,) against the Christians, and appearing against them in a tumultuous manner, upon the occasion of Christ, complaints might probably be brought to the emperor, who no doubt upon this account banished all that nation from Rome. So that Suetonius having a confused notion of Christ, might easily be induced to express himself this way. And now that this

was all that Claudius did against the Christians, it is plain to me, from one argument that has escaped Dr. More, but is to me unanswerable, taken from the 18th chapter of the Acts, where, after the sacred historian had taken notice of Claudius' banishing the Jews out of Rome, and of Aquila and Priscilla's being lately come upon that account from Italy to Corinth, he tells us of Paul's lodging with them, because he was of the same occupation. But being pressed in spirit, to preach Christ, upon the coming of Silas and Timothy from Macedonia, he goes into their synagogue, and reasons with the Jews and proselytes there, upon this head: and having converted some, particularly Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and Justus, in whose house he afterwards disputed; Crispus no doubt being thrown out of his office, and Sosthenes put in his stead, and Paul continuing to preach in Justus' house, which joined to the synagogue; the Jews are incensed to such a degree, as to rise tumultuously against Paul. Sosthenes therefore, the new chief ruler of the synagogue, and the unbelieving Jews, make an insurrection, and seize upon Paul, and carry him to the judgment-seat, before the pro-consul Gallio, that excellent Roman, the elder brother of Seneca. He tells the Jews, that if Paul, or any other man, were guilty of what was lewd, wicked, or unjust, that in that case he was obliged to punish such persons according as the Roman law and justice did require, but seeing they accused Paul of nothing of that kind, but only of doctrinal matters, relating to their own law and religion, he had nothing to do with them; and therefore he drove them all away, and set Paul at liberty, which made the Gentiles fall upon Sosthenes, the chief author of this tumult, and beat him before the judgment-seat; which Gallio permitted to be done and connived at, either as judging that he did deserve to be so treated, or supposing it might prevent the Jews from acting so factiously and tumul-

tuously again. Now, after this short, but exact account of this history, it will be easy to see how precarious and groundless, nay false, Grotius' opinion is, of a persecution being raised against Jews and Christians, in the days of Claudius. For if there had been any such thing, or any edict for it, how came Gallio to tolerate a public synagogue of the Jews, and suffer Paul to preach openly? Or if the Christians were only ordered to be persecuted, why did not the Jews use this as the reason of their accusing Paul, who to be sure wanted not good will to have done so, and were not ignorant that this would have been the main argument to prevail with the pro-consul? And had there been any such edict, can we imagine that Gallio was ignorant of it? For so he must have been, seeing he tells the Jews that he had no orders to punish any man for his religion or sentiments that way, but only those that were guilty of wickedness or lewdness in life. If any say that his temper was to care for none of these things, I answer, this expression may indeed denote his temper. But I suppose it speaks forth not only that, but his principle and sentiment, as judging it unrighteous to persecute or punish any man for mere opinion. But whatever this had been, had there been any edict for persecuting the Christians or Jews, he durst not have neglected his orders, especially when the edict must have been so recent, and when he had what might have passed for a just reason of his punishing both the party accusing, and the party accused, viz., their disturbing (as he might have represented it) of the public peace. But indeed it is too plain to need any further proof, that Claudius' banishing the Jews out of Rome, was accompanied with no persecution, either against them, or against the Christians. And this Dr. Hammond confirms, by what he says in his annotations on Acts xxvi. 31, forgetting, that this way he destroys his own foundation of interpreting the Revelation. Where upon these words of Luke, that

Agrippa, Festus, and Berenice, and the rest of the company, after they had heard Paul's defence, did conclude, that he had done nothing that deserved either death or imprisonment, the Doctor observes, that the reason why they did conclude so was, because there had been as yet no edict emitted against the Christians by any of the emperors; and this was the reason also, says he, why Gallio, the pro-consul of Achaia, said publicly, that it was not for him to judge of things that the Roman laws had determined nothing about. For, continues the doctor, though Claudius had commanded the Jews to leave Italy, by which the Christian Jews were forced to go away also, not as they were Christians, but because they were Jews, yet there was yet no law made against Christians, as such, at this time. It is true, he says, that John was not only banished, as Aquila and Priscilla were, but confined in the Isle of Patmos. But he should have given the reason why John was the only person persecuted. However, I shall examine this assertion, and the reason that the Doctor gives for it in other places of his Annotations.

We come therefore now, in the 2d place, to consider the testimony of Epiphanius, upon whose credit alone Grotius and Hammond believe that John was in Patmos in Claudius' time. And here, by the way, I cannot forbear to observe the strange mistake of Dr. Lightfoot, who agrees in the main with these learned men, in interpreting the Revelation, in relation to the Jews, before the destruction of Jerusalem, and therefore makes John to see these visions long before that; but has this peculiar to himself, that he imagines John was not banished there, but went thither voluntarily, to preach the gospel to the inhabitants; whereas John himself doth expressly tell us, that he was there as a sufferer and witness for Christ. (chap. i. 9.) "I, John, who also am your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom

and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the Isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." So that as this refutes Dr. Lightfoot, and confirms what Grotius and Hammond agree in, that John was not in Patmos as a traveller, but as a prisoner and sufferer, so it is enough to refute even them also; for the words do plainly insinuate, that John was not the only persecuted man at this time, but that there was then a persecution raised against all Christians in general; and therefore, we may be assured that he was not in that island in the days of Claudius, in whose time we have proved there was no persecution.

But to return—Epiphanius says, indeed, that John saw his visions in Patmos, in the reign of Claudius. (Heres. 51, sect. 12, and 33.) But can his single authority weigh down all antiquity, that says the contrary? Shall we believe him rather than Irenæus, who lived two hundred years before him, and was the scholar of Polycarp, the scholar of John himself? Now, what can be plainer than the words of Irenæus, (Lib. 5. cap. 30, as they are preserved in the original by Eusebius, lib. 5, cap. 8. Hist. Eccl.) Ει γαρ εδει αναφανδον τω νυν καιρω κηρυττεσθαι το ονομα αυτου, δι' εκεινου αν ερρηθη του και την Αποκαλυψιν εωρακοτος. ουδε, γαρ προ πολλου χρονου εωραθη, αλλα σχεδον επι της ημετερας γενεας, προς τω τελει της Δομιτιανου αρχης. That is, "If his name (viz., that of Antichrist, or the beast) had been openly to be divulged at this time, it would no doubt have been told by him that saw the apocalyptical visions. For it is not a long time since he saw these, but even, in some sense, in our own time," viz., towards the end of the reign of Domitian. And that Irenæus had just reason to say, that John's seeing the revelation was almost in his own time, or within the memory of the men of that generation, if not of his own also, is plain from chronology; for he being the scholar of Polycarp, who was martyred in the year of

Christ, 167, and being himself put to death in the year 202, if we suppose that he wrote this but ten or twelve years before his death, yet he might justly say, that there was but about an age's difference from his time, and that wherein John saw the Revelation; for if John was in Patmos towards the end of Domitian's reign, it could not be sooner, in any propriety of speech, than the year 90, seeing he began his government A. D. 81, and died 96. And who can doubt but Irenæus does deliver here, what his master Polycarp had told him? For as none knew the history of John better than that worthy person, so none had better opportunity to know what related to this matter than Irenæus, by reason of his long and intimate acquaintance with him.

This seemed a foundation sure enough, of old, to Eusebius, and if some men had not some private ends to promote, by opposing it, might be a sufficient foundation to all men still. Let us therefore hear what this learned historian says on this head.* "In those days, (says Eusebius, viz., in the days of Credo, Ignatius, and Simeon, of whom he had been speaking,) the apostle John, the beloved disciple, was yet alive, inspecting the churches of Asia, having returned after Domitian's death from the island, whither he had been banished. Now, that John was then alive, it is enough to adduce the testimony of two persons of great authority, who are worthy of all belief, and were ever eminent for defending the truth, I mean, Irenæus and Clemens Alexandrinus; the first of whom, in his Second Book against Heresies, speaks thus—All the Presbyters (says Irenæus) who lived familiarly with the apostle John in Asia, do assure us, that they had this related to them from John himself, for he lived with them even unto the times of Trajan . . . In his Third Book also, Irenæus gives us the same

* Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 23.

account, in these words—The church of Ephesus also, which was founded by the apostle Paul, and was afterwards under the care of the apostle John, until Trajan's time, is an eminent witness of what was delivered to us by the apostles. And besides him, Clemens likewise (says Eusebius) does not only take notice of the same time, but gives a particular story relating to him, in that book of his, which bears this title, "What rich man can be saved?" And then Eusebius recites the story at length, which were too long to insert here.

Now, if John lived to the days of Trajan, he must have been a prodigiously old man, according to Epiphanius, who says he was ninety years of age in Claudius' time. For giving him all the allowance that can be desired, viz., that John was so old in the last year of Claudius, and that he died in the last year of Trajan, he must have been 134 years old, at least, when he died; seeing Claudius died A. D. 54, and Trajan did not begin to reign until the year 98, though others say, with more probability, not until A. D. 100. Now, besides that it is not easy to believe, that so thoughtful and laborious a man should live so long, the improbability of what Epiphanius says, appears further from this; that if in the year 54 from Christ's birth, John was ninety years of age, he must have been thirty-six years older than Christ. And if so, it seems very odd, that Christ should say to him from the cross, "Man, behold thy mother; and to Mary, Woman, behold thy son." (John xix. 26, 27.) For as this seems to say, that he was at least as young as Christ, this account makes him an old man of near seventy years of age at that time. Which, as it must suppose Mary to be a very aged person of between eighty and ninety at least; so it contradicts the constant and unanimous tradition of the church, which supposes him to be very young at that time. Whence Baronius says, that he was but twenty-five years old. And Nicephorus

relates, out of an epistle of Evodius, bishop of Antioch, that the Virgin herself was not then fifty; seeing Christ, as he asserts, was born when she was but fifteen years old.

Whence it appears, how little we ought to trust Epiphanius, in opposition to all antiquity besides. Which, made Drusus say, *Scimus omnes Epiphanium in multus graviter hallucinatum.* (Lib. xiv. obser. cap. 21.) And upon the same account Petavius scruples not to correct him; for where he has it, *Imperante Claudio*, he writes this short note in the margin, *Mendose pro Domitiano.*

But the truth is, though I am not willing to detract from this author's credit, yet I suspect it was not so much an error of judgment as of will, or that which some call a *pia fraus*, that made him desert the tradition of the church in this matter. For his telling us this story is upon the occasion of an objection of the Montanists against the Apocalypse, taken from this supposition, that there was no church in Thyatira, when John wrote the Revelation; which it seems, he thought would serve another turn, if he inverted it, by telling them John said so only by way of prophecy. Whence he proceeds to prove the verity and divinity of the book; and therefore thought his argument would be the more cogent, the further he ran up the date of the Revelation, and John's being in Patmos. But as this was a poor as well as unlawful shift, so I shall leave him and his authority both, to those that have more time and leisure to consider them further.

For to me there is proof enough, from the Revelation itself, to assure us that it was written in Domitian's time. For it is plain, not only from chap. i. 9, which I touched upon before, but from the strain of all the seven epistles which John writes to the churches of Asia, that at the time of his being in Patmos, or rather before, there had been a severe persecution upon them. Therefore he tells the church of Ephesus, that she had laboured

and endured, and had not fainted under the troubles that had come upon her. (chap. ii. 2.) And so the Christians of Smyrna are told of their tribulation, and exhorted not to fear imprisonment or any thing they should suffer. (ver. 9, 10.) This being added, that they must expect tribulation for ten days; which, by the way, is no inconsiderable hint, seeing the persecution of Domitian, from the first beginning of it, lasted about ten years, which in the dialect of St. John, are called days. I might mention many other things, but this is plain, that the church was under persecution every where at that time, if it were only from these and the like expressions, "Be thou faithful unto the death," and "To him that overcometh," &c. And besides all these things, mention is made of an eminent martyr of the church of Pergamos (chap. ii. 13), whose name was Antipas. For the apostle John, or rather Christ, is so express in relating this, that we may deny any thing in the Bible, if we deny this matter of fact. I am not concerned here with the allegories some fanciful men make upon this name, when they tell us, tell us, that it signifies as much as Antipater or Antipapa; nor have I any thing to do with the stories that later authors tell us of him, as of his being bishop of Pergamos, and of his being burnt in a brazen bull, with other circumstantial matters relating to his person or death. Let Aretha, therefore, Metaphrastes, Cedrenus, Pererius, Surius, Baronius, Cornelius a Lapide, and a thousand more, be supposed to mistake in their relating this story; yet no man shall ever make me disbelieve what St. John says of this matter. And I must have further proof, than ever I expect to receive, before I can believe that all these authors are mistaken, as to the foundation of their relation; when they unanimously tell us, that this martyr suffered in the reign of Domitian.

And now I suppose I have said enough to prove that John was not in Patmos before the reign of Domitian.

And if so, the foundation of Grotius and his followers falls to the ground. So that these corollaries must naturally follow from what has been said, and remain as certain truths:

1st Corol. The visions of the Apocalypse relate neither to the Romish nor Jewish state, before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus.

2d Corol. The Revelation relates to the church and her adversaries, as to those things that were to fall out after the eversion of the Jewish state.

Now, before I proceed, I must desire the reader to observe the distribution, which Christ himself makes of the subjects treated of in this book (chap. i. 19), when he commands John, saying, Γραφον α ειδες, και α εισι, και α μελλει γινεσθαι μετα ταυτα; *i. e.* "Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." Where it is plain, three things are distinguished. 1. The things which John had seen, viz. the emblems, figures, or hieroglyphical representations, that had been presented to his eyes or imagination, from ver. 12 to 19. Then, 2. The things which were existent and in being at the time when John was in Patmos, viz. the churches planted by the apostles, particularly the seven Asiatic ones, to which John had a peculiar relation, and to which he was ordered to direct seven epistles. And then, 3. The things which were to fall out hereafter, viz., the prophetical part of the book, beginning with the fourth chapter; as is plain from the first verse thereof. Where, after John had written what related to both the former heads, he tells us, that he heard a voice, like the voice of a trumpet, talking with him, and commanding him now to begin and write the things which he was to show him, and represent to him emblematically, which were to be μετα ταυτα, after the expiration of the things men-

tioned before, which were said then to exist, viz., the then present circumstances of the Asiatic churches.

So that this is a sufficient answer to those that object, that this book cannot be supposed to contain a prophecy of the state of the church for any long time, seeing it is said, that the things prophesied of in the revelation must shortly come to pass (chap. i. v. 1). For seeing we have a double explication of this expression—viz., chap. i. ver. 19, and chap. iv. ver. 1 ; I ask whether we are to stick so to the letter of the first short proposition, as to reject the explication given of it in the following places. It was very proper indeed, when some things in this book did concern the then present state of the church, and some other things that did relate to the future condition of it; to say as in chap. i. ver. 1, that the prophecy related to things that were shortly to come to pass ; because not only were those things to be soon fulfilled that concerned the churches of Asia at that time; but the other things were then also to enter upon their begun accomplishment. But that we might not imagine that the whole of this book was to be accomplished shortly, we are told, (chap. i. ver. 19, and chap. iv. ver. 1,) that what related to future time, was to be accomplished and fall out afterwards. And that accordingly we might see the full extent of this prophecy, we are led down from scene to scene, till we are brought to the end and consummation of all things at last. And now seeing we have proved that this book was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, we must desire our antagonists to to find out something else, to which they can accommodate all the figures of the Revelation, before we quit our interpretation, merely because they dislike it, though they can offer us nothing in the room of the same. So that until they be able to enlighten our minds, with another scheme than that of Grotius, which we have sufficiently, though briefly refuted: I must be bold to lay

down this further Corollary, which is the same with our first postulatum in the preceding discourse.

3d Corol. That the Revelation contains the series of all the remarkable events and changes of the state of the Christian Church to the end of the world.

And the distribution of this book, into the three parts I have mentioned, lays a sufficient foundation for another proposition also.

3d Proposition. The seven epistles directed to as many churches in the lesser Asia, do not immediately relate to the Christian church in general, and therefore cannot be interpreted prophetically, in any proper sense, as if they did denote so many periods of time in relation to it.

I might demonstrate this, were it needful. But seeing it makes nothing for my design, which way soever men understand it, I shall say nothing to it now: especially because the learned Witsius, my professor and master formerly, has sufficiently demonstrated what I assert in this proposition, in his Diatribe de septem Epistolarum Apocalypticarum sensu Historico and Prophetico, published in his Miscellanea Sacra.

And neither have I time to prove other propositions, that might appear more necessary: only seeing the key of interpreting the Apocalypse, which the angel gives John (chap. xvii.) is so very plain, I cannot but build another proposition upon it.

4th Proposition. Babylon the great, or the Apocalyptical beast, taken in a general sense, as it is represented, with its seven heads, and ten horns, is no other than an emblem of the Roman empire.

For besides that Dr. Cressener, and others, have proved this, the text itself is demonstration enough to all those that will be at pains, attentively and impartially, to consider it. For seeing the angel does expressly say, that

by this was meant the seven hilled city, (ver. 9,) and the city that then did reign over the kings of the earth, (ver. 18,) I cannot imagine what he could have said more plainly upon this head.

But seeing he represents the empire, under the peculiar consideration, of its being governed by a woman, who is called the great whore, or adulteress; therefore, this lays a foundation for another proposition.

5th Proposition. The seven headed beast, especially considered, as it is represented as rid upon by the whore, doth represent Rome to us as it is under the ecclesiastical government of the papacy, or apostate church of Rome.

This the angel does sufficiently insinuate, (chap. xvii. ver. 8,) when he says, "The beast which thou sawest, was, and yet is not at this time." *i. e.* that beast is indeed the same Roman empire which was before, and was represented to thee, (chap. xiii. ver. 1.) But it is not yet, in another sense—viz., as now thou beholdest it under the rule of a whore, or the apostate church of Rome. For this last ecclesiastical form of government is not yet come, but it is to come (when it ariseth) out of the bottomless pit, in order to go thither again, into endless perdition.

And if this be once granted, then that will naturally follow, which I am to represent as another proposition.

6th Proposition. The seven kings represented by the seven heads of the beast, are no other than the seven forms of supreme government, that did successively obtain among the Romans.

This the angel doth likewise sufficiently insinuate, (ver. 10,) which can never be understood of particular emperors, at least not of those Grotius fixed upon, whose opinion this way we have already refuted. And therefore, seeing five of the forms of the Roman government, were fallen in John's time—viz. Kings, Consuls, Dictators,

Decemvirs and Military Tribunes, (as Tacitus reckons them, Annal. lib. i. section 1); and seeing the imperial authority was that which was in being then, we have no reason to quit so plain and exact an interpretation, until more be said against it, than ever has been yet produced to the world.

And were it not that I am confined so much now, both as to time, and lest this postscript should swell to an enormous bulk, I should not fear to attempt the demonstration of these last propositions, and to proceed to others that would lay a further and more strong foundation still, of that method of interpreting the revelation, which the generality of protestants are agreed in. But I hope I have said enough for this place, to secure the principles I go upon, by which the things which I proposed at first as postulata are, I think, sufficiently proved. And seeing my principal design in writing this postscript, was to refute the hypothesis that Grotius and Hammond go upon: I leave it to the candid and impartial thoughts of the reader, whether I have not said enough to prove it to be altogether precarious.

And now seeing every one must see how much I have been straitened, both as to time and paper, in this postscript, I hope the reader will pass the more favourable construction on what defects he may observe in my performance, either as to matter, method, or the calculations of time, which I have run upon; in which, if there be any thing obscure or confused, the study of brevity and dispatch has occasioned it. But since I have advanced nothing, in relation to future time, but by way of conjecture, nor indeed asserted any thing (in relation to that part of the prophecy which is fulfilled) dogmatically and positively, but only proposed my thoughts, after the manner of a rational probability; I suppose no man will think it worth his while to make a noise about little mistakes, that perhaps I may have been guilty of, through

haste or inadvertency. But if any person shall take occasion, from what I have said, to study the Apocalypse to better advantage than I have attained to do, and shall give the world a better built, and more clearly connected scheme of the visions of this book; I assure him that none shall more rejoice in such a performance than I, and I shall be one of the first to return him thanks for refuting me. For truth is all I seek after, and that it may ever, and in all respects prevail, is, and shall be my constant prayer and study.

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